

SAFETY SPOTLIGHT

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The "Safety Spotlight" feature of The Green Light shines the spotlight on safety professionals to gain insight into their background, and their thoughts and ideas on safety in our industry.

Meet Donald Grice, Safety Manager for Buddy Moore Trucking in Birmingham, Alabama. Donald started his career in Safety as a local driver who started leading orientation sessions because of his knack for relating to and understanding the needs of his fellow drivers...

How did you get started in Safety?

In 2008, I worked as a local driver for Hornady Transportation. During my downtime, I found myself interacting with the drivers who were attending orientation sessions. The Safety Manager at that time, Wolf Lindh, approached me and inquired if I would be interested in instructing orientation. I accepted the opportunity and led orientation sessions for a duration of 3 years before transitioning into a role in safety.



During this time, I developed a good rapport with the drivers and gained an understanding of their needs. This experience provided me with the chance to assist drivers with both personal and professional issues.

What do you view as the main duties of a Safety Director?

I have worked for several safety directors and, based on my experience, I believe that their main duty is to keep their Safety Managers well informed about all federal regulations. Their role also involves trusting their team to execute all policies and procedures effectively. Additionally, safety directors should have confidence in their team's ability to make sound decisions that will protect the company and the drivers.

Why is safety important to you?

Practicing safety measures is crucial for preventing accidents and injuries. By avoiding these incidents, it not only reduces stress but also fosters a positive environment and promotes peace of mind. Safety practices ensure both physical and emotional well-being. They play a vital role in saving lives on a day-to-day basis, benefiting both drivers and the public using roadways.

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What has been the most challenging task in your career as a Safety Manager?

One of the most challenging tasks I've encountered is *the need to encourage drivers to mentally and emotionally slow down while on the road*. It is important for drivers to be reminded to appreciate and find enjoyment in the profession they have chosen for their livelihood. In today's fast-paced world, it is easy for individuals to overlook the value of savoring the present moment.

How do you promote your company safety culture? How do you get employees to “buy in” or get involved?

It is important to not only correct risky behaviors but also to reward your drivers. It is crucial to remind them how important they are and ensure that their efforts are not overlooked. I have discovered that a word of encouragement and a heartfelt thank you for their hard work can have a significant impact on drivers. Many drivers often feel like they are simply another truck number, so it is vital for a safety manager to demonstrate a different perspective. Express appreciation for the sacrifices they make by being away from their families.

What advice do you wish you had received early in your safety career? What advice would you give someone who is starting out in their safety role?

Throughout my career, I have had the privilege of working with some exceptional Safety Directors. Their wealth of experience and the opportunity to collaborate with them greatly facilitated my transition into the role of safety manager. For individuals entering the field of safety, *I would recommend trying to comprehend the unique circumstances of each person you encounter*. Showing compassion is often essential, as not all instances of a driver's behavior stem from negligence or recklessness. Some behaviors may arise from personal challenges, and treating all drivers uniformly may result in the loss of valuable team members. Therefore, having a deep understanding of the individuals involved can greatly influence your decision-making process.

I would like to personally thank Chris Hornady, Christie Baker, Wolf Lindh, Debra Allred, and Adam Casey for their extraordinary mentorship. Without their leadership, I wouldn't be where I am today.

Of the ATA Comp Fund/AIR recommendations, which policy or procedure has been most effective for your company and why?

The recommendations cover all aspects, not just one. These policies bring benefits not only to companies but also to the well-being of their drivers. They are implemented with the goal of safeguarding drivers from enduring long-term injuries and to shield both parties from legal actions.