

# White Paper

## Why You Should Steer Clear of a One-Size-Fits-All Fleet Safety Program

Every fleet is different, so they need their safety programs to reflect the individualized needs and realities of the fleet's operation. A one-size-fits-all safety program may look attractive on the face of it, but it comes with serious limitations, because it can't address the underlying issues that may be affecting a fleet's safety record.

Many fleets that are tempted to follow the one-size-fits-all route may be attracted by the fact that this type of fleet safety program has a plug-and-play aspect that makes implementation seemingly easier.

While this can be the case, it won't address the underlying safety needs of the fleet. Fleets that feel overwhelmed by having to build a fleet safety policy from scratch can take comfort that there is a common foundation that can be used to build a highly individualized fleet safety program.

Every fleet safety program is supported by the same four pillars:

- Senior management buy-in
- Training
- Rewards for good driving
- Integration of safety technology<sup>1</sup>

While providing a common foundation and starting point, even the same pillars will be individualized from fleet to fleet. For example, management champions may come from different departments; training may be handled with more behind-the-wheel experience in one fleet, while in another, the emphasis is on online training; and good driving may be supported, recognized, and rewarded in different ways depending on the fleet's culture — one fleet may enact a months-long contest with varying levels of rewards and recognition, while another fleet may simply provide a quarterly bonus to the safest driver.

### The Dangers of a One-Size-Fits-All Safety Program

It can't be emphasized enough that every fleet — even fleets in the same industry — faces different safety issues. Implementing a fleet safety program using a cookie cutter approach is simply destined for failure.

A commercial delivery truck operating in congested city traffic will have to navigate a host of safety issues specific to its operational needs and the



<sup>1</sup>4 Pillars of a Fleet Safety Program."Wolski, Chris and Sandoval, Kat. Automotive Fleet. June 2016. <http://www.automotive-fleet.com/channel/safety-accident-management/article/story/2016/06/best-safety-and-accident-management-practices.aspx>. Accessed: July 17, 2017.





geography the truck operates in. Traffic controls, one-way streets, tight loading and unloading areas, pedestrians, inattentive drivers, and so on, means that the fleet will have to address these issues differently than a sedan sales fleet that operates primarily on highways in light traffic traveling long distances. The sedan fleet will be facing other issues related to safety — speeding, collision avoidance, distracted or drowsy driving (particularly for long-distance driving), what to do in the event of a roadside emergency, and so forth. While each fleet would be facing some similar issues, like inattentive drivers, the safety strategies will be markedly different.

While a one-size-fits-all fleet safety program certainly will not meet the operational needs of a fleet, even more crucially there is danger of not getting support of leadership or engagement from drivers if the safety program doesn't reflect the actual needs and realities of the fleet. Senior management wants to know how a fleet safety program will benefit the bottom line — a generic, one-size-fits-all fleet safety program can't do that. Drivers want a program that reflects their particular needs — for example, working in bumper to bumper traffic everyday, drivers will want tips to avoid getting caught between wide-turning trucks — a generic fleet safety program can't do that.

Without top down and bottom up support, a fleet safety program will not succeed.

### **How to Set up an Individualized Safety Program**

The four pillars outlined earlier will help fleets lay a foundation, but that's just the first step. To create a truly individualized safety program, fleet personnel need to first evaluate the pain points for the fleet that need to be addressed first. These pain points can include but aren't limited to:

- High-risk drivers
- Safety policy (whether it exists, it's complete enough, needs updating, etc.)
- Primary causes of crashes
- The most common violations

The next step is to outline the primary elements of the custom program, and how it will address the identified issues, and what it will entail. These elements can include, but aren't limited to:

- Consequences of violations
- Best remediation tactics
- Program implementation steps



- The metrics that will be used to identify the severity of a violation or risky behavior
- How success is defined

It goes without saying that a customized fleet safety program by its very nature can't be developed in a vacuum. Company stakeholders, such as HR, risk and safety leadership, and drivers should be involved every step of the way. Since it has expertise in the specifics of vehicle and driver safety, fleet and risk typically take the lead, but it is important to get leadership buy-in and support, because without it, it's unlikely a fleet safety program can be implemented (at least in a way that has a real impact for the operation). From an operational level, high-level support of the program will give the fleet manager the ability to enforce the program. This is particularly helpful for fleet managers that may have executive vehicles as part of their fleet management responsibilities<sup>2</sup>. Additionally, sales leadership buy-in can help them see the value of investing their sales force's time in training.

### Engaging drivers

There is no doubt that getting stakeholder support and management buy-in for a customized fleet safety policy that addresses specific fleet pain points is the first step to successful implementation. But success and failure is equally attributable to how well you can engage drivers, and this may involve going through a similar process as identifying the safety pain points to find driver pain points.

Fleets in the same industry may have the same vehicles and personnel may do essentially the same jobs, but that doesn't mean the fleets are the same. Many of the differences are due to the individuals and the work culture they have created.

The human factor is the linchpin of a fleet safety program's success. If the program is about the driver, they'll embrace it; if not, they'll do everything in their power to circumvent it. It comes down to simple psychology. Fleet personnel have to answer one fundamental question when engaging drivers: the "what's-in-it-for-me" factor.

New policies are often the bane of a fleet driver's life, so the initial engagement message has to be delivered in a positive manner along the lines of "this policy is designed to protect you from getting into a crash and getting home safely each and every day." It also needs to be clearly communicated what the policy is, why these elements have been put in place, and how these policies are also tied to the bottom line, e.g., assuring the company's customers that the fleet is operating in a safe way that guarantees on-time, safe delivery of products<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> "How to Create an In-House Fleet Safety Program." Fleet Financials. June 2015. <http://www.automotive-fleet.com/channel/safety-accident-management/article/story/2015/06/how-to-create-an-in-house-fleet-safety-program.aspx>. Accessed: July 17, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> "Smart Strategies for Promoting Your Fleet Safety Policy." Lyden, Sean. Fleet Financials. November 2013. <http://www.fleetfinancials.com/article/story/2013/12/smart-strategies-for-promoting-your-fleet-safety-policy.aspx>. Accessed: July 17, 2017.



Once the policy is properly presented and there is initial buy-in, fleet personnel need to continue the engagement process. This may involve multiple approaches and some may have to be refined or dropped if they aren't effective. There are different ways that drivers can be engaged, including:

- Driver portals
- Newsletters (hard copy or electronic)
- E-mails from fleet, EHS, or company leadership
- Gamification

While these are all proven methods of engagement, they must be chosen and tailored to the needs of specific drivers. For example, competition at one fleet may be dependent on individual drivers going head-to-head for cash prizes. Another, similar, fleet may see success by grouping drivers into teams competing for bragging rights and a trophy. A fleet safety provider, such as CEI, can help fleets develop engagement strategies that work for their drivers.

### **The Power of Individualized Training**

One-size-fits-all fleet safety training won't address the unique needs of the fleet, and won't impart to drivers the skills they need in order to safely operate their vehicles and get their jobs done.

Fleets typically find success with a combination of behind-the-wheel, classroom, and online training. What is emphasized and how this training is delivered is dependent on a number of factors — the skill of the drivers (i.e., how much in-depth training they need), whether it's a dispersed or centralized fleet, the demographics of the drivers, and the mission of the fleet.

Training can be handled as a group or individually, depending on skill or behavioral trends or risk level groupings. Group training can be effective if a new policy or vehicle type is added to the fleet. Individual training should be mandatory for a new hire in order to establish the safety culture from the very beginning.

In addition, any driver who has been identified as "risky" should also receive focused, individualized training designed to address the risky behavior. For example, CEI can help fleets develop a robust incident-based strategic training program to help the driver identify and correct the specific behavior that is causing him or her to have an elevated risk profile, eliminating the less effective and more expensive catch-all approach that would be found in a plug-and-play training program.



The amount of training, the type of training, and regularity of training is partially dependent on the fleet's safety rating/needs. While it can be assumed that experienced drivers know the rules of the road and that they should be driving safely, refresher training is important for keeping the safety message top-of-mind and should be administered every few years, at a minimum. Consistent, effective, and relevant training, combined with driver engagement strategies, will ingrain the safety message and make it second nature.

### **Advances in Safety technology**

There is little argument that telematics is playing a bigger role in every aspect of fleet operations, particularly on the side of reporting and analyzing a wide range of data, including location, maintenance/vehicle health, and driving behaviors.

For fleets developing unique fleet safety programs, one of the biggest benefits of telematics technology is that it is highly customizable — by its nature fleets can escape the one-size-fits-all trap by implementing telematics. Fleet managers can identify the parameters that they want to monitor and receive alerts and reports that are specific to the safety needs of the fleet.

For example, individualized driver dashboards can be created with the help of a fleet safety provider such as CEI to allow drivers to keep tabs on their safety status — and, in the case of gamification, show drivers how they stack up against other drivers. This is an opportunity to implement a reward or recognition program for the top drivers in your fleet in the form of plaques, point systems, vehicle perks or upgrades, and more.

While gamification develops a sense of pride and elan, it fulfills an even more important operational imperative by helping fleet managers identify distinct risky behaviors in the lower scoring drivers, allowing them the opportunity to implement an incident-based strategic training program to correct risky behavior as it occurs.

Telematics is only one set of safety technology that can help fleets develop a customized fleet safety strategy and escape the one-size-fits-all trap. The implementation of other safety technology — collision avoidance, lane departure warning, etc. — is both a question of individual and operational need. A sales rep driving a sedan on a busy highway may benefit from lane departure warning technology, a driver working off road in a mining or construction zone, will likely not need this type of technology, but they could benefit from a backup camera or an in-camera monitoring device.

<sup>4</sup>"Safety and Cost Reduction Go Hand in Hand." Fletcher, Lauren. Automotive Fleet. July 2014. <http://www.automotive-fleet.com/channel/safety-accident-management/article/story/2014/07/ensuring-safety-and-cost-reduction-go-hand-in-hand.aspx>. Accessed: July 17, 2017.



And this is only the beginning. Risk assessment technology can harness data to proactively make fleets aware of drivers that are at risk of an accident in the near future with state-of-the-art predictive modeling and prescriptive solutions to prevent those accidents from occurring. This will take the assessment of evaluating driver risk to the next level, allowing fleet managers to address behaviors before they can escalate to a crash.

While technology is helping fleets manage risk better, it is not a substitute for a strong fleet safety policy with driver and leadership buy-in, active driver engagement, or effective training. It is just an additional set of tools that can be used to further customize the fleet safety program.

### **Safety Policies Aren't Static**

The biggest downside of the one-size-fits-all safety program is that it's often treated as a one-and-done proposition. As with any policy, fleet safety programs need to be revisited regularly and evaluated — and updated where appropriate.

As anyone involved in fleet today knows — technology, regulations, and training techniques continue to evolve, and a fleet's safety program has to evolve to meet these changes. By treating the safety program as a dynamic system and not something set in stone, never to be changed, fleets will be able to have a highly individualized and effective fleet safety program that can meet any challenge.

### **About CEI**

From its origins in the collision repair business in Philadelphia in 1976, CEI has become a fleet industry leader through its clear vision of service excellence and its record of innovation in fleet accident repair. As a result, our hard-earned reputation is one of exceeding customer expectations while delivering cutting-edge fleet accident repair solutions.

In 1983, we entered the fleet accident management business as one of the industry's pioneers, and within a few years, we added rental vehicle, loss recovery and vehicle remarketing services. In the 1990s, we transitioned to a digital technology infrastructure, built by our team of IT professionals. And in 2003, we launched our fleet driver safety business, DriverCare. Today, DriverCare 5.0 offers more ways for fleets to monitor, assess, train and intervene with their primary and secondary drivers than any other online fleet safety application.

Accident prevention and management is CEI's only business. Our proven ability to save fleets millions of dollars and prevent thousands of accidents every year is the reason our fleet accident repair business has grown so fast. Our loyal



customer base now consist of some of North America's largest fleets and fleet management companies, with more than 900,000 vehicles under management, and more than 250,000 claims handled every year – a volume that enables us to deliver unsurpassed levels of fleet accident repair service and economies of scale. Additionally, there are over 250,000 drivers enrolled in our safety management program, DriverCare, and CEI pulled over 300,000 MVRs in 2016.

Want to find out how you could save with CEI's accident management and fleet safety services? Simply need expert advice about a complicated fleet accident or driver safety problem? Click here (<http://www.ceinetwork.com/services/>) for no-obligation support from our fleet driver management professionals!



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