Drivers – Distance (General) – Fact Sheets



WHAT KINDS OF JOBS INVOLVE DRIVING?

This profile refers to any worker who operates a motor vehicle for work purposes. This driving may include drivers of work or personal vehicles, those travelling from site to site, driving to an off-site meeting, picking up office supplies, etc. There are many individuals who drive as a major portion of their occupation – first response crews, surveyors, road repair and maintenance workers, sales, home care, trades, taxis, bus/van, public transit, school buses, tow trucks, and transports. While driving is a task that may be a part of many occupations, this document focuses mainly on those who drive long distances or for long times with few breaks (such as over two hours at a time).

What do drivers do?

This profile refers to general duties of drivers. Drivers must operate vehicles safely at all times. They may or may not be delivering goods or passengers. Drivers are often responsible for doing pre-trip inspections, route planning, and scheduling.

What are some health and safety issues for drivers?

- Use of devices that cause distraction including cellular phones, global positioning system (GPS) devices, etc.
- Sitting for long periods of time.
- Vibration from road or vehicle.
- Being fit to drive (eyesight/night vision, medical conditions, etc.).
- Varying road and weather conditions, including winter driving.
- Working alone.
- Stress.
- Fatigue, shift work, late hours, or extended work days.
- Night driving (time of day, reduced visibility, etc.).
- Actions of other drivers (operation of vehicle, “road rage”).
- Workplace violence (e.g., bullying, verbal abuse, physical attacks, robbery).
- Potential of exposure to improperly labelled hazardous chemicals or biological materials (e.g., medical specimens).

- Slips, trips and falls when exiting vehicles or checking loads.
- Work/Life balance – Impact of being away from family for long periods of time.

What are some preventive measures for drivers?

- Follow your organization's safe driving policies and procedures.
- Plan ahead to use safer routes and to travel at safer times.
- Keep equipment and vehicles in good mechanical condition and working order. Check your vehicle before each use.
- Set up the driver's seat to suit your body best.
- Set up devices such as cellular phones and GPS to operate hands-free.
- Follow a recommended shiftwork pattern and know about risks associated with shiftwork and extended workdays.
- Learn how to drive in winter conditions such as ice and snow, or avoid driving if it is not safe to do so.
- Keep all areas clear of clutter and equipment, including the interior of the vehicle. Items should be stored securely.
- Use correct personal protective equipment and clothing, including safety footwear. Personal protective clothing includes high-visibility (HV) clothing.
- If working alone, use a cellular phone or have another way to stay in regular contact with your workplace.
- Learn how to avoid musculoskeletal pain or injury from sitting for long periods of time and physically awkward positions.
- Understand the effects of whole body vibration.
- Take care to avoid slips, trips, and falls.
- Do not use or consume alcohol or other substances (including prescription medications) that may impair driving skills.
- Do not use stimulants to fight fatigue.
- Be aware of any hazards involved with the load you are carrying (such as hazardous goods, refrigeration requirements, etc.).
- Be aware of the hazards of persons, pets, etc. that might be left in a locked and enclosed vehicle when temperatures and sunlight exposure are very high.

What are some good general safe work practices?

- Always follow any laws that apply including hours of work), and local traffic or highway laws.
- Wear your seatbelt.
- Know how to operate the vehicle safely, including using cellular phones and other devices, and drive to the current road conditions (including winter driving).
- Take regular breaks. Stand up, walk, and stretch.
- Eat healthy meals.
- Stop driving if you are tired (fatigued), or if it is otherwise unsafe to continue.
- Know your company's policies for emergency procedures, and incident/accident reporting.
- Know how to check the vehicle before each use.
- Make sure the vehicle is maintained appropriately.
- Stay informed about chemical hazards including WHMIS and Transport of Dangerous Goods (TDG), where applicable.

- Be prepared for severe weather conditions (hot/cold).
- Learn about the risks associated with fatigue.
- Use appropriate shift rotations.
- Know if there are any effects from medicine that could impair driving. Read the label, follow instructions, and ask your medical professional before driving.
- Practice safe work procedures when working alone, or off-site, or if handling money. Have a check-in procedure in place.
- Be aware of ways to prevent workplace violence (e.g., working alone, bullying, verbal abuse, physical attacks, robbery, etc.).
- Practice safe lifting techniques and materials handling (lifting, carrying, lowering, etc.).
- Prevent slips, trips and falls on level ground, stairways, and ladders.
- Do not leave people or pets in a locked, enclosed vehicle in extreme weather (e.g., heat or cold).

Always:

- Know how to report a hazard.
- Follow company safety rules.

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