

Using Fleet Tracking Solutions to Boost Driver Safety



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The Importance of Maintaining Safe Driving for Your Business

For organizations with a mobile workforce or fleet, safe driving behaviors have never been more important and more challenging. The average direct costs of an automobile collision continue to rise, and indirect costs of collisions total 4-10 times more than direct costs. Employers can expect to see the average crash cost **\$16,500**, with it exceeding **\$74,000** for a crash containing injuries. If it is a fatal crash, employers expect to pay more than **\$500,000**.¹ While the direct costs (and some of the indirect costs) are covered by your insurance company, many of the indirect costs have financial and cognitive impacts to the company, the employees and families involved, and the community as a whole.

Lapses in driver safety can have lasting effects—both financial and nonfinancial. An organization's efforts to boost safety behind the wheel is critical for business continuity and success, workforce health and well-being, and community relations.



Behaviors Impacting Safe Driving

Driving Safely— Not Everyone's Priority

While safe driving has never been more important for your business, recent data shows that drivers are focusing on other priorities. Key behaviors associated with an increase in collisions—most notably speeding and distracted driving—are prevalent and on the rise.

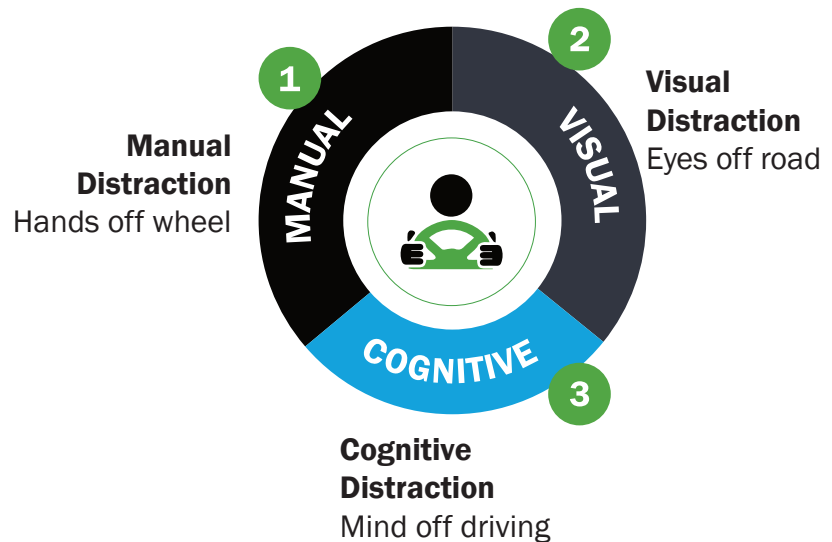


Driving Error	Behavior Examples	% of Crashes
Recognition	Inattention Distracted Driving Poor Visual Scanning	41% of crashes
Decision	Speeding Aggressive Driving False Assumptions	33% of crashes
Performance	Overcompensation Poor Vehicle Control	11% of crashes
Non-Performance	Sleep Medical Emergencies	7% of crashes

Distracted Driving

NHTSA also states that nearly 400,000 people were injured in crashes involving distracted driving in 2018. Distracted driving is not just cell phone usage. It also includes eating while driving and figuring out navigation systems. Sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for 5 seconds. At 55 mph, that's like driving the length of an entire football field with your eyes closed.³ From eating behind the wheel, to changing music and talking to another passenger, distractions are extensive.

Three Main Types of Distractions



Speeding

According to data compiled by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in 2018, excessive speed was a factor in 26% of all accidents, and the higher the speed (especially in larger commercial vehicles) the greater the damage to people and property. That year 9,378 deaths resulted from speed-related collisions, which was a 6% drop from 2017.² While the downward trend in speeding related accidents is a good sign, speeding should always be avoided. Speeding puts everyone on the road at risk, not just the occupants of the vehicle. Besides breaking the law, there is:

- Greater potential for loss of vehicle control.
- Reduced effectiveness of occupant protection equipment.
- Increased stopping distance after the driver perceives a danger.
- Increased degree of crash severity leading to more severe injuries.
- Economic implications of a speed-related crash.
- Increased fuel consumption/cost.²

Aggressive Driving

Aggressive driving behaviors like tailgating, speeding and cutting off others put others in immediate danger and should be avoided. Harsh braking, sudden acceleration, and speeding can be monitored through third-party solutions. Keeping your largest asset—your people—safe is difficult when you can not be with each one 100% of the time. A few ways to mitigate risk when other drivers on the road are exhibiting aggressive behaviors are to maintain safe speed and distance, use turn signals, and to allow others to merge. Your team represents you, even while on the road.

The Importance of Driver Safety Programs



Adopting a formal program that puts a strong focus on safety, with support from leadership through to drivers, is a crucial step toward establishing a culture that values it and achieves it. Effective programs typically include communicating and reinforcing program goals, training in regards to safe driving behaviors, communicating expectations and establishing individual responsibility, monitoring driver safety, recognizing safe driving or coaching unsafe behavior, and consistently applying consequences for workers that do not show improvement. A thorough safety-focused program includes all areas of the business.

Assess

Advanced diagnostics and reporting make it easy to assess vehicle health and driver performance. Driver scoring ensures you and your drivers know how safely they are or are not driving.

Prevent & Coach


With Azuga Fleet tools in hand, address specific areas of vulnerability—from vehicle maintenance to individual driver coaching.

Insights

Gain greater insight into your operations, from efficiency to safety. See how your fleet stacks up against industry standards and best-in-class fleets.

Ongoing Safety

In addition to drivers, Azuga Fleet extends the benefits of safety to your entire staff—managers, safety directors, accountants, operations specialists—and to partners, such as insurance providers and lenders.



Four Steps to Building a Safe Driving Program

Step 1

Establish the foundation for a safety-first culture

Step 2

Continually reinforce the safety message

Step 3

Publicly monitor your workers' driving records and safety trends

Step 4

Recognize and reward good and improved performance

1. Establish the foundation for a safety-first culture

For most organizations, the most dangerous aspect of their workers' job is driving. By laying the groundwork properly and establishing expectations from the time an employee is hired, you can build a culture where attention to safety from company leaders, managers and workers is an important aspect of every work day.

Tips for establishing a culture of safety:

- Establish written policies related to traffic laws, seat belt use, prohibition of distracted driving, and prohibition of aggressive driving.
- Review policies with workers periodically to make sure they are clear and understood. Get workers' commitment to safety by having them sign the policy documents.
- Invest in a fleet tracking system to gain access to data that lets you monitor compliance with these policies.
- Tie driving messaging into the mission and vision of the company - how it can improve customer service and create efficiencies.

2. Continually reinforce the safety message

Placing importance on safe driving throughout the company, coupled with the actions taken by management from the top down to consistently reinforce that message, will have a direct impact on the attitudes your staff maintains about driving safely.

Tips for reinforcing the safety message:

- Get trained on the reporting capabilities of your fleet tracking system that help you identify speeding, harsh braking, hard starts and hard cornering. These aggressive behaviors are indicators of a likelihood of a collision. Communicate visibility into these behaviors and how they can be prevented.
- Host weekly safety meetings with workers to reinforce good driving habits and review data what indicates unsafe driving. Take time to highlight top performers and most improved drivers.
- Actively discuss and encourage safe driving. Reinforce your concerns for your workers' safety every morning when they leave the yard. Your team is the most important asset to your company's performance.



3. Publicly monitor your workers' driving records and safety trends

Business owners or fleet managers typically pull an MVR (Motor Vehicle Report) when hiring a new employee who will be behind the wheel as part of their job. Many get updated MVRs annually, as part of the insurance renewal process but that can leave many months of exposure for workers to incur driving violations, such as speeding or reckless driving.

Tips for monitoring violations and safety:

- Review MVRs semi-annually or even quarterly to make sure you are aware of any violations occurring within your workforce.
- Proactively monitor trends in your drivers' habits so you can prevent accidents rather than react to them with a fleet tracking solution. Increases in the frequency of aggressive driving behaviors, like speeding and hard stops, point to a higher probability of a collision.
- Create transparent policies regarding violations, including the numbers and frequency. Be clear about which driving behaviors are considered unacceptable and will lead to increased oversight and coaching.



4. Recognize and reward good and improved performance

Recognizing safe driving behaviors sends a strong message about the importance of safety in your culture, and adds a healthy competitive spirit among your team. Adding recognition and rewards decreases the negative attitude that workers may have about management using a “big brother” tracking technology.

Tips for reinforcing the safety message:

- Make the rewards and recognition process a consistent part of the way you manage your workers and teams. Include it as a part of ongoing safety briefings.
- Make it fun! Drive competition among workers so they work to improve and beat their coworkers. Their drive to win means they are safer and lowers costs and risks for your business.
- Share quantified data results with your team, gathered from custom reporting tools, to encourage their actions and increase the probability that they will continue.
- Look for fleet tracking solutions that make this easy with built-in driver scoring and reward systems so you don’t have to invent them from scratch.



Driver Safety Playbook

- ✓ Support from leadership and management with participation throughout the organization
 - Demonstrate commitment to driver and employee safety
 - Be proactive and seek feedback from your team and provide opportunities for questions
- ✓ Create policies for driving violations, seat belt use, distracted driving, and aggressive driving behaviors that are a strong step toward lowering risk
 - Examine if previous policies and procedures need to be revised
 - Published corrective action/coaching policy for workers showing unsafe behaviors
- ✓ Utilize vehicle technology to capture driver behaviors such as GPS fleet telematics, video and advanced driver assistance that generate measurable and comparable safety scores
- ✓ Provide driving safety education with ongoing driver training and coaching
 - Look for behavior patterns and set realistic goals
 - Target the behavior, not the driver, and give positive reinforcement
- ✓ Continuous discussion about safe driving; daily, weekly, monthly safety check-ins and briefings
- ✓ Use a rewards program to provide incentive for safe driving, praising drivers who have corrected actions, or shown continuous improvement

The Role of Telematics in Boosting Driver Safety

Even when you have established a driver safety program, have clearly communicated policies and have trained your workers on the importance of safe driving, you can be certain they will still use risky behaviors on the road. The newest generation of fleet tracking solutions provide a powerful set of tools that support your safety message and policies, as well as activities to recognize and reward safe driving, or coach for improvement when needed.

Look for these capabilities in a fleet tracking solution to help you build and maintain an effective driver safety program:

- Driver safety reports: Reporting that shows specific areas where underperforming driving habits need to be corrected, aiding in coaching conversations.
- Driver safety score and stack-ranking charts: A score derived from aggressive driving events recorded (speeding, hard stops, hard starts, idling) along with situational content to arrive at a score that makes it easy to identify workers practicing safe driving, and those that need coaching.
- Coaching and training: Videos and learning content to help poor drivers improve their safety scores and get back on track, and to give good drivers a refresher on safe driving techniques.
- Support for dashboard cameras: Enabling video capture in the moments before, during and after a collision to aid in the assessment of the root cause. Additional insurance incentives may be available when adding a camera.
- Distracted driving monitoring and prevention: Monitor and prevent cell phone use while the vehicle is in motion (texting, calling, use of applications).
- Rewards program: Built-in rewards for safe driving with administrative capabilities that simplify funding rewards, selecting reward options, and distributing them to high performing drivers.
- Posted versus actual speed reports: Reporting on actual speed versus posted speed to better understand speeding in context.
- In-vehicle coaching: Audible alerts at the point of an aggressive driving event alerting the driver to alter his or her behavior.
- Seat belt usage reporting: Identify drivers with a higher risk of getting injured in a collision.
- Gamification and social sharing tools: Features of the scoring and rewards system that make safety scores visible to all team members, encouraging sharing, comparison and competition to drive improvement.



About Azuga

Azuga is a leading global connected vehicle platform, helping our customers turn data about vehicles and their use into intelligence that improves operations and safety while reducing costs and risk. Azuga provides reliable end-to-end solutions for commercial fleets, government agencies, insurance companies and automotive industry suppliers, encompassing hardware, the Azuga One platform, award-winning fleet applications and data analytics. Azuga is headquartered in Fremont, California.

Our award-winning Azuga Fleet solution is used by thousands of customers -from the small fleet of one or a few vehicles up to several thousand-and is lauded by our customers for its ease-of-use, robust features and affordable pricing.

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References

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