

Beyond The Cab

The only safety management newsletter dedicated exclusively to addressing injury prevention and workers' compensation cost control for trucking companies.



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Who's Wearing the "Safety Director" Hat?

Particularly in small businesses, in which each manager or supervisor wears several hats, there is often no particular person designated to coordinate safety efforts for the company. In those businesses the company owner or manager often tries to negate the importance of the role of a 'safety coordinator' by stating that "safety is everyone's responsibility."

Fortunately, trucking companies don't often suffer from that problem. For the most part, even very small trucking companies have designated someone to steer the company's safety program. The owners of trucking companies recognize that in the absence of someone designated to ensure compliance with applicable FMCSA rules and to promote driving safety, it simply won't get done.

For that reason, the requirement contained within MIA's Certified Loss Control Program to "Designated a Safety Coordinator" is something that virtually every trucking company can check-off the list without hesitation.

However, it's recommended that this opportunity be taken to give at least a few minutes of thought to the person who fills the role of safety coordinator (or safety director) within your company, or in the case that you are that person.... to take a few minutes to perform a self assessment.

The effectiveness of a person filling the role of "Safety Director" is largely dependent on personal characteristics.



MIA's Certified Loss Control Program...

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He or she should have an understanding of the entire operation (or at least be capable of learning it), as a limited knowledge will hinder his ability to effect positive change throughout the company. If that person has no experience as a professional driver, he should at least accompany a driver on the road for some time to gain an appreciation and understanding for the frustrations, challenges and hazards that drivers face away from the company facility.

He or she should be able to communicate well (particularly in a one-one-one setting) and should exhibit openness, demonstrated by a willing to listen to others and learn from them... irrespective of their position in the company.

Humility is another characteristic that should be exhibited by a safety director, as he must be open to the possibility that his own failings, or the shortfalls of the safety initiatives that he has implemented in the past are at the root of a problem.

He should be a problem-solver and have a healthy level of optimism, viewing no circumstance or hazard as an insurmountable hurdle, and should be able to motivate others to share that optimism and actively participate in the company's safety efforts.

A safety director should also be analytical (the person who asks "why"), for it is that individual who will not stop until he has identified the root cause of incidents.

But likely most importantly, the person filling the role of Safety Director should view safety not only as a priority, but as an immutable value.

Although a big part of the job for many safety directors is to ensure compliance with FMCSA regulations, effective safety directors recognize that government safety regulations represent the bare minimum standards, and that compliance with those regulations alone does not equate to an effective safety management strategy.

Although each trucking company has something unique in their approach to promoting injury prevention, some common tasks performed (or delegated and coordinated) by the company's Safety Director are...

- § Setting and justifying high standards for employment
- § Conducting new-hire safety training that includes injury prevention content
- § Conducting accident investigations with a focus on prevention
- § Facilitating an effective and structured hazard identification process
- § Ensuring follow-through with hazard mitigation and control measures
- § Coaching drivers and other employees to fulfill their roles relative to safety

These and other responsibilities are elements of MIA's Certified Loss Control Program, and will be discussed in future "Beyond the Cab" articles.

Get the Recognition You Deserve



Each month MIA's Loss Control Newsletter will publicly recognize companies who have achieved the status of having a Certified Loss Control Program. Be among the first to have your company's name listed here.