

TRANSNEWS



Safety Tips

Management Edition

Volume 34

Being Prepared for the Big One

Clay Thomas & Associates, LLC, offers unsurpassed resources to assist in your commitment to safety and loss control. If there are any questions please contact us.

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Being Prepared for the Big One 1

QUICK TIPS

A good safety driving initiative requires the involvement of managers and supervisors as well as drivers and other employees. Driver safety training and communication should be provided on an ongoing basis. Even experienced drivers benefit from repeated training and reminders. Continual training and communication across the company can help make safe driving part of your business culture.

The unfortunate rash of serious passenger transportation accidents in the recent few weeks has gotten a lot of people's attention - from enforcement personnel to elected officials and also those involved in the passenger transportation business. Multiple serious and fatal accidents in short bursts have always garnered lots of attention and rightfully so. However, almost as fast as they grab the headlines, they seem to fade away and be obscured by other current events, bureaucratic red tape and wrangling, or just everyday business. However, let me tell you a few interested parties who will never forget in such short time about these incidents: the injured victims; the families of the victims killed; the plaintiff attorneys representing those killed or injured; and the transportation companies involved in the unfortunate accidents.

While many transportation operations hope to never have to go through such a traumatic event, the fact is that accidents happen - and not just to bad operators. The longer a company is in business, the better the odds that a serious event will occur; and in this industry, companies tend to be passed

from generation to generation. So the most prudent advice is to plan for when - not if - your operation is involved in a serious accident.

If you are involved in a catastrophic incident you can be sure of one thing - microscopes will be looking at various components of your operation in great detail. It will be very chaotic, and, without planning, you will not be able to effectively manage the ensuing circus. And, amongst all the chaos, you'll have your normal business operations to manage. There are a few items that will definitely come into play and which you should be ready to address. I've given summaries below of our experience when it comes to each item:

Disaster Recovery:

Depending on the size and complexity of the incident and party being transported, you will need to accommodate and make continuing arrangements for uninjured passengers, interact with the injured passengers and their family members, make arrangements for your involved employees (whether injured or not), and shuttle replacement vehicles and

staff or arrange for alternate transport with other companies. You may also be requested to provide information related to the trip and passengers to police investigators and responders.

Continuing Operations: If you have one main person who oversees all operations, it's time to diversify. That person will likely be handling the recovery efforts detailed above and will have little time or desire to handle the continuing day-to-day operations in the short term. Thus, you need to have a helping hand - someone who knows the operations role - ready to step in. In many companies that may be the owner; but in other companies, the owner is the operations manager - and has nobody to fall back on.

Press/Media: There should be one main contact for all media inquiries and responses - and you need to educate your employees about their responsibility in deferring all inquiries to this designated person. This person may be the same one who handles *Disaster Recovery* or may be a separate staff member, but must work closely with the

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Disaster Recovery head. This person will need information so that they can provide intelligent answers too difficult, but common questions. Various staff members can assist gathering this information so that the designated media head is well prepared.

The absolute worst answers to give in response to media inquiries are "I don't know" or "No comment," yet they are heard in response to questions arising after serious transportation accidents commonly. This is because employees answer questions they shouldn't and because advance planning for the situation has not been done. There will be immediate inquiries, though it will take your team a bit of time to gather some facts. In that gap, a simple response that "the Company is investigating the situation and will reply to inquiries when information becomes available" – and actually reaching out to address those inquiries when ready – is appropriate. In any serious transportation accidents, questions will include information related to:

- *The Company* – Having a prepared brief statement about the Company history and what it is doing in response to the incident is an easy step which can mostly be prepared in advance and sitting on the shelf, ready to go if needed.
- *The Passengers* – Information on the passengers, those injured or being treated, and the welfare of passengers not injured or treated and released will be important in showing the Company is maintaining control of the situation and in charge.
- *The Driver* – Questions about the driver's welfare to the drivers work schedule will be asked. This is an opportune to talk about the Company's driver training program assuming there is one. The response should be tailored to fit the situation as appropriate. If there are indications of driver error in specific areas, molding the response to

address the Company's procedures in managing those areas is desirable (example – procedures followed to manage driver fatigue can be incorporated if there is an indication that the driver may have fallen asleep). The involved driver's schedule for the previous week should be gathered, training records, driver qualification records, and employment history will all provide information that will be necessary and (hopefully!!) help craft answers which not only answer the questions, but also highlight the Company in a positive manner whenever possible.

- *The Vehicle* - Vehicle maintenance history may or may not be an issue, but it is another area you should be prepared to speak to, whether asked about it or not. Gather the vehicle's maintenance history and be prepared to detail the last preventative maintenance inspection, the last DOT annual (semi-annual) inspection and the last roadside inspection (if any). Also, know the make, model, year, any aftermarket enhancements done to it and be prepared to discuss your maintenance program details, including your daily vehicle inspection process, your preventative maintenance schedule and your mechanic qualifications. Gather all relevant paperwork and check to insure you're not missing anything. If you use another vendor for service, insure that you know their qualifications.
- *Your Statistical Data* – Carriers who have a DOT number likely have some compliance information in the DOT's CSA Safety Measurement System. This data is publicly available and you can bet the media and attorneys will be looking at that data after any serious incident. Don't be blindsided – make sure you know what your data is and be ready to explain (the best you can) any negative data or negative inferences made by the data. If you have no or little negative data, it likely won't come up – but that

doesn't mean you shouldn't tout your compliance performance and safety rating when you have the opportunity.

- Finally, if you are involved in a serious accident, you can almost certainly expect an on-site DOT compliance audit shortly following the accident. So, while you are gathering the above information, you may also want to make sure you have all your required paperwork in order.
- It's certainly hopeful that you will never need to rely on the emergency planning detailed in this article – but for certain, it's better to be prepared than not. I suggest detailing the actions/responsibilities of each person/position involved in such a plan so you're not trying to remember who should be doing what and there is no confusion about responsibilities. Because when that incident does occur, the one thing you won't have time for is to try to figure out how to respond.

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Safety Tips

Driver's Edition



Maintain a Safe Speed

Clay Thomas & Associates, L.L.C. offers unsurpassed resources to assist in your commitment to safety and loss control. If there are any questions please contact us.

TRANSNEWS is a publication of Clay Thomas & Associates, L. L. C.

If you have any questions or comments about this newsletter, or any ideas for future issues of SAFETY TIPS, contact Jeffrey Thomas at

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The saying goes, "Speed Kills." While that can be true in extreme circumstances, the saying, "Speed causes collisions" would be more accurate. Plain and simple – going too fast for the situation will lead to an increased risk of collision and injury to you and your passenger(s). The following are some suggestions to help you properly manage driving at a SAFE speed.

• **Obey posted speed limits.** A driver's speed should never be faster than a rate consistent with existing speed laws, road traffic and weather conditions. Never forget that posted speed limits apply only when weather and surface

conditions are favorable.

- **Reduce speed when your vision is restricted.** At night and when fog or other conditions restrict visibility, speed should be reduced to a point which will enable you to stop within the distance you can see ahead.
- **Reduce speed when traction is reduced.** Always reduce your speed when rain, snow, ice or other adverse road or weather conditions exist.
- **Reduce speed when approaching any highway/rail grade crossing.** Watch for other vehicles in front of you (such as school buses,

hazmat trucks, etc.) that may be required to stop at the grade crossing even when a train is not approaching.

- **Reduce your speed for emergency vehicles.** Whenever you hear a siren, pull to the side of the road and stop to permit the emergency vehicle to pass safely. If you encounter an emergency vehicle or patrol car with flashing lights stopped on the side of the roadway, slow down and move away from the vehicle to allow plenty of space for emergency workers and/or law enforcement personnel. This is now a law in many states.

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Watch for Animals

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, more than 200 motorists are killed and thousands more are injured in animal/vehicle collisions in the United States each year. The insurance industry estimates that the annual cost to society for these fatalities and injuries is \$200 million.

In most states, between one and five percent of all reported traffic collisions involve hitting an animal in the roadway. In many states, deer present one of the

greatest risks to motorists throughout the year.

As our urban habitats encroach upon rural environments, deer/vehicle and other animal/vehicle collisions are increasing in frequency. Complicating the deer problem is the fact that many states with concentrated deer populations have highways intersecting the travel routes of deer.

An adult deer can weigh more than 200 pounds. Hitting a deer with a moving vehicle, bus or truck can

severely damage the vehicle and cargo and frequently results in injury, sometimes even death. Driving too fast for conditions, overdriving headlights, and not being alert for the presence of animals are the primary mistakes linked to animal-related collisions.

There is no simple way to keep deer and other animals off the roadways. Therefore, professional drivers and all motorists need to be extremely cautious when traveling through areas with concentrated deer and or

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- **Reduce speed before entering highway work zones.** Increase your following distance also, and never exceed the posted speed limit, even when highway workers are not present.
- **Reduce speed appropriately before entering a curve or ramp.** Always negotiate curves at a reduced speed consistent with the sharpness of the curve, available sight distance and prevailing road and traffic conditions. Enter the curve or ramp 10 miles per hour below the posted advisory speed. Advisory speeds posted on most curve and ramp signs may not give you an accurate idea of how fast your vehicle can safely take the curve. These advisory speeds are appropriate for passenger cars and may be too high to permit a

commercial vehicle to negotiate the curve safely. On some ramps and curves a separate advisory speed for larger vehicles may be posted, and this should be your guideline for determining a safe speed. The conditions and stability of your vehicle and your load need to be considered at all times. Do not overestimate your stability.

- **Reduce speed in heavy traffic or when traffic slows.** Remember that a commercial vehicle requires a much longer distance to stop than a passenger car traveling at the same speed on the same road conditions. Reaction times for commercial vehicle drivers versus car drivers are the same. However, the braking distance for commercial vehicles versus cars is considerably different. Be cautious, slow down, and

increase your following distance as necessitated by traffic conditions. Following distance should never be less than six seconds for a commercial vehicle and 1 second per 10' of vehicle for other types of vehicles.

- **Adapt speed to changing situations on rural and other non-interstate roads.** Constantly adapt your speed to account for regularly changing situations and circumstances that increase the possibility for human errors that can lead to crashes.



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other wildlife populations. The best way to prevent animal/vehicle collisions is to be vigilant at all times to the possible presence of animals, especially in area where warning signs are posted.

In daylight hours, a watchful driver can often see an animal at the side of the road, or on the road, soon enough to avoid a collision. In darkness, however, you frequently do not see an animal until it is too close to avoid. For this reason and because many animals including deer, are most active during the evening and early morning hours, the majority of animal/vehicle collisions happen between dusk and dawn. Consequently, all drivers need to be especially alert for animals on the roadways during these hours. Reducing speed at night is a significant contributor to collision prevention.

"T" Intersections

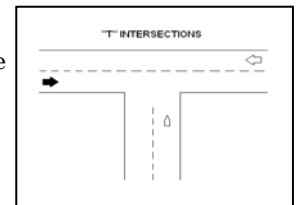
One of the most common collision scenarios for operators of commercial vehicles is intersection collisions. Complicated and busy intersections are obvious examples, but even non-intimidating intersections, such as T-intersections can spell trouble. T intersections are common both in the city and out in the country. And, while we don't typically think of it, "T" intersections also exist wherever a driveway or exit from a parking lot or customer's property enters uncontrolled only by a stop sign – making it one of the most common types of intersections.

Here's a good example of a common scenario facing professional drivers: You are driving your vehicle on a two-lane road at 45-50 mph. About a quarter mile (1200 feet) ahead, there is a side road where vehicles enter onto the road you are currently driving on. At 50 mph you are traveling about 75 feet per second. A truck sees you are 1200 feet away and decides to pull out and travel in the same direction. It takes the driver at least four seconds just to move out into your lane. During this time, you have already traveled 300 feet and the truck which entered your travel path may still be in second gear – moving at about 10-15 mph or about 20 feet per second. The space between your vehicle and the truck is closing fast. You lift your foot off the accelerator to begin slowing down. Soon enough, you will

certainly have to brake in order to maintain your space cushion.

Remember, your space cushion can disappear very quickly at 75 to 100 feet per second.

How about a different situation? The picture below has you pulling out from a side street exiting a parking lot or customer's property. Do you always allow sufficient space for approaching traffic? Or, do you just expect the other vehicle to slow down and hit the brakes? Suppose the other driver is not alert or aware that you are moving slowly while you increase your speed.



Remember, there are a lot of distractions for drivers these days – especially the average, casual driver. As the professional, you can't assume anything. In this scenario, it's best to insure you have a large enough space when entering the roadway as to not impede the normal flow of traffic on the roadway, or get out into the roadway and up to speed as quickly as possible without causing an unsafe ride for your passengers. Forcing your way into traffic is not the way to operate your vehicle – it's not only discourteous and unprofessional; it can create a very dangerous situation for all vehicles involved.

Compensation (Continued from page 1)

compensate for the demands throughout the day. When you are tired it's harder to do your work and easier to get injured. No one gets paid extra for being more fatigued at the end of the day. The

more fatigued someone becomes, the harder the work becomes and the greater the chance of injury. Compensating can allow your body to function more efficiently and make the work easier by allowing your body to recover from the work

demands.

A few seconds of compensation goes a long way towards keeping your body healthy!

Stay on Guard

In order to be safe, you have to be alert; you must be on guard at all times.

One of the worst things that you can do is to let your guard down by becoming preoccupied with other things.

We all have personal problems that plague us to one degree or another – health, bills, the future – or perhaps preoccupation stemming from illness or fatigue. Such preoccupation is a major factor in many on-the-job mishaps that are sometimes mistakenly labeled freak accidents.

When you become lost in thought, you are off guard. You've let your defenses down and are wide open for an accident or injury. If a person is blind or deaf, they learn

to compensate for their handicap; their other senses become more alert and sharpened. When you are preoccupied you are blind and deaf, but don't know it – and without the sharpened senses of a person with a hearing or seeing disability.

But how do you guard against preoccupation? How, indeed, can you detect that preoccupation has reached the point, either in yourself or others, that you're easy prey to hazards or hazardous conditions?

If we knew the answer to this, it would mean a major breakthrough in the field of safety.

It would be nice to be able to take a reading of someone's brain waves to see if they were lost in thought

and open to an accident. However, we don't have that ability. So we must do the best we can by trying to make safety something that comes natural to all of us, even when we are not consciously thinking about it.

By consistently reinforcing these safe work habits and behaviors, they will then be so natural that even if you become preoccupied at times, your safe habits will prevent you from having an accident. That's your employers hope anyway – and the reason safety is such a big issue in the company. Reducing the possibility of accidents due to preoccupation is a matter of preventative safety, and a reason why we must stay on guard at all times on-the-job.

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Back safety includes the following:

- The importance of preventing back strain by using proper lifting techniques and proper material handling
- The importance of drinking plenty of water
- Importance and how to lose excess weight
- Eating healthier
- maintaining strength in your abdominal muscle core

Neck and Shoulder Pain

There are many reasons and causes for neck and shoulder pain. Like back pain, there are few adults who have not experienced neck or shoulder discomfort. All of the same principles hold true in preventing neck and shoulder pain as in preventing back pain. Improper work habits, injury and accidents all contribute to a sore neck and shoulder. One thing that is a little unique with the neck and shoulder is that many people tend to "carry" stress and tension in

that area of their body. These are some ways you can reduce or prevent neck and shoulder pain:

- Maintain a good posture when working. Do not hunch.
- Warm up and stretch before doing strenuous activity.
- Invest in a good pillow.
- Avoid sleeping on your stomach
- Lift loads properly and exercise good body mechanics when moving objects.

Do you really know how fast you are going?

Speed and Distance Relationship

Speed (MPH)	Distance Traveled (feet)*		
	1 second	2 seconds	3 seconds
5	7	15	22
10	15	29	44
15	22	44	66
20	29	59	88
25	37	74	110
30	44	88	132
35	51	103	154
40	59	118	176
45	66	132	198
50	74	147	221
55	81	162	243
60	88	176	265
65	96	191	287
70	103	206	309

* Feet traveled per second equals 1.4666 times speed in miles per hour



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