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The Driver Trainer

Criteria for selecting a driver trainer goes beyond merely choosing a person who drives well.

This report provides an overview of the considerations that need to be evaluated when selecting a driver trainer.

Introduction

The key to a successful driver training program is to carefully select a qualified instructor. Depending on the size of the fleet, this may be a full- or part-time responsibility. Whenever possible, hiring a driver trainer from outside the organization should be avoided due to the person's lack of familiarity with the company's operations, possible resentment by the existing drivers, and lack of knowledge of existing problems and policies within the company. While these factors can be overcome, it might prove to be time consuming and disruptive. On the other hand, training an existing employee to provide this function can prove to be a tremendous asset to the company.

This report provides an overview of the considerations that need to be evaluated when selecting a driver trainer.

Selection Criteria

The person selected as the driver trainer should have a superior personnel and safety record, to serve as an example for others, and sufficient experience with the company to have knowledge of their operations, procedures, and future plans. A mature, enthusiastic individual is essential in order to gain the respect of the other drivers and deal effectively with supervisory personnel.

The driver trainer also must be able to analyze and interpret driver performance and accident records, as well as communicate those findings. Consideration should be given to the fact that, beyond the fundamentals of safe driving, driver training must also address areas such as company rules and policies, operation of specialized equipment, routes and schedules, emergency procedures, cargo handling (especially when hauling hazardous materials), and government regulations.

Foremost, management must recognize that the person selected must be able to teach others effectively. The driver trainer needs to have a sound understanding of adult educational methodology, including:

- Understanding the domains of adult learning
- Knowing how to develop effective educational materials
- Proficiency in the presentation of both lecture and practical course materials
- Understanding the motivational factors that affect adult learners
- Having the ability to speak effectively to a wide range of learners
- Being capable of evaluating candidates fairly and without bias
- Being capable of evaluating educational material based on fit and function

If the individual lacks the necessary teaching experience, it may be advantageous for that person to attend a train-the-trainer course to develop these skills.

Management Support

Management should do everything they can to provide the necessary support systems to make the driver trainer effective. Positive driver attitudes can be promoted by emphasizing to the drivers that the intent of the training program is to benefit

them by helping them perform their jobs safely and efficiently. Sufficient time and appropriate materials should be provided to the driver trainer. On-going evaluation of driver performance will indicate the effectiveness of the driver trainer and assure that the program continues to address the needs of the fleet operator.

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