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# Driver Qualification for Drivers of Automobiles, Vans & Light Trucks

The establishment of a meaningful and realistic driver qualification program is vitally important to the successful operation of any fleet, including an incidental fleet where the primary operation is other than the transportation of freight, such as for sales, service, and local delivery operations. By placing sufficient emphasis on selecting the best available driver, a company helps to avoid future financial losses resulting from crashes and abuse of equipment.

The opportunity to select the right person for the position will largely depend on management's ability to develop job standards that reflect the prerequisites and skills necessary for satisfactory job performance. In order to achieve a program that is effective and still practical for its operation, the management of a company should decide the degree of emphasis needed in each of the following areas, as well as understand the regulations with which the operation must comply.

## Driver Qualification Files

Driver selection is a one-time process; assuring that the driver remains qualified should be an ongoing process. A file should be maintained for each person hired, to facilitate review of the driver's record and to provide future reference to the driver's qualifications. Information that should be kept in the file includes:

- A copy of the driver's application form
- Notations regarding information developed during the driver's interview
- The most recent motor vehicle record
- Results of reference checks with previous employers
- Information indicating the successful completion of a road test

- Information indicating the successful completion of a physical examination, if applicable
- Results of background checks for drivers of passengers or high-value cargo
- Any information which will give management insight to a driver's qualifications, such as additional training (including dates of completion)

## Job Analysis

The first task in any employee selection process is to determine the specific requirements for each job category. The employer must determine exactly what the employee must do, how it must be accomplished, and what skills are required. Once these facts are known, management can establish standards that will reflect the specific nature of the position and make it possible to recognize the best applicant.

## Application Form

An addendum specific to driving information should be made part of the job application form. Information about the applicant that should be requested on the form includes:

- Driver's licenses
- Traffic violation convictions
- Driving experience
- Crash record
- Criminal history
- Special training related to transportation
- Authorization to investigate the applicant's background

## Interview

An interview should be used to resolve any questions regarding the information obtained or omitted on the application form. A visual check of the driver's license should be made to ascertain that the driver has the proper class of license, whether there are any restrictions, and if the license is current.

## Reference Checks

A check should be made with previous employers to develop information about the driver's general character and professional ability. This check can be accomplished by a telephone interview, a letter, or a personal visit. The employee's file should verify that these checks were made and should record the responses received.

## Motor Vehicle Record

A copy of the driver's state Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) should be obtained from each state where a driver holds a license to ascertain that the applicant has a valid license and to review the driver's past record. An MVR also

should be obtained periodically (e.g., yearly) for each driver and reviewed to determine whether remedial training is necessary.

Criteria should be established to determine what an acceptable MVR should be and the consequences of not meeting that criteria. However, caution should be exercised to assure that all employees are being evaluated under the same criteria.

## Physical Qualifications

The physical fitness of the employee should be considered before hiring, but only after the driver has been offered a job. The employer should arrange for physical examinations with individual physicians or industrial clinics. The medical examiner should be aware of the physical and emotional demands placed on the employee, so that it can be determined whether the applicant is qualified for the position. In addition to checking an employee's physical condition before hiring, periodic physical examinations should be required and arranged for by the employer. Reexaminations may indicate the onset of a problem and therefore allow appropriate corrective measures to be taken (e.g., deteriorating eyesight).

## Road Test

Giving a driver a road test will allow the employer to ascertain deficiencies in driving skills and provide needed training prior to assigning a driving task. The same type of equipment that will be assigned to the driver should be used in the test, and the test should be sufficiently long to cover a variety of situations. This test should be designed to help identify the driver's competent areas and weak points and be conducted by the best driver the company has who also has been trained in conducting the road test.

## Additional Background Information

Depending on the position, additional background information may need to be generated through checks with credit bureaus and police departments (where permissible) or through the use of professional investigative agencies. Standards must be non-discriminatory; pertaining equally to all applicants.

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