

Berkley Life Sciences Fleet Safety Newsletter Article Series – Article 1 Why do I need a fleet management program?

Did you know that a motor vehicle crash occurs every 5 seconds and every 12 minutes someone dies in a motor vehicle crash?¹ Your company's potential exposure to car accidents increases with the number of drivers, the number of vehicles, and the number of miles driven. With these odds, you want to be sure you have a solid program in place to manage your fleet and drivers and reduce your exposure.



If you are currently relying on an employee having a valid driver's license and conducting some vehicle preventative maintenance as the entire extent of your fleet management program.....can we talk?

Those of us in the life science industry know a great deal about management programs. We have management programs for the development, manufacture, quality and marketing of our product(s), workplace safety and a host of other issues. While many of us do not have a large commercial fleet, most of us rely on a fleet of some sort to conduct business, whether it is the automobiles used by our sales or technical representatives to sell or service our product, the trucks that we use to transport our supplies and/or products or rental cars for travel. However, a fleet management program is often an afterthought, especially if the fleet is small or employees use their personal vehicles for company business. Sometimes a program is implemented only after particular event such as the recommendation of an insurance carrier or as a result of a significant loss arising from a vehicle accident.



If you don't already have a fleet management program, consider this: motor vehicle crashes cost employers \$60 billion annually in property damage, medical care, lost productivity and legal expenses. These costs subsequently impact benefits and insurance costs.¹ The average motor vehicle crash costs an employer \$16,500. If an employee has an on-the-job crash that results in an injury, the employer's cost is around \$74,000 and can exceed \$500,000 if the crash results in a fatality.² Employers may be held liable for the actions of an employee within the scope of his or her employment, including motor vehicle accidents caused by the employee and recovery by an injured third party is likely to include actions against the employer.

A fleet management program can help you to manage these exposures, protect your employees and financial resources and guard against liabilities. A good fleet management program sets expectations for drivers up front. Some of the components of a solid fleet safety management program include:

¹ OSHA Motor Vehicle Guide

² NHTSA [2003]. The economic burden of traffic crashes on employers: costs by state and industry and by alcohol and restraint use. Publication DOT HS 809 682.

1. Management commitment and a written policy
2. Driver rules and responsibilities when operating a vehicle
3. Permitted use of vehicles – only business or is personal use allowed?
4. Verification of driver qualifications and acceptable driving records
5. Requirements for accident reporting, investigation and follow up
6. Disciplinary procedures for employees not following policy and not meeting acceptable driver criteria
7. Driver training on policy and defensive driving techniques
8. Vehicle selection, inspection and maintenance
9. Something to consider – use of vehicle tracking devices

We will expand on each of these elements as part of our fleet safety newsletter article series. When you are ready to develop or expand your fleet management program, Berkley Life Sciences Risk Management Resources has fleet safety resources available to you and can provide guidance and input.



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Donii Fox has over 20 years of experience in industrial hygiene and biological safety focusing on the biomedical research industry, academia and healthcare. Ms. Fox began her career managing industrial hygiene and biosafety programs at the University of New Mexico and later at the University of North Carolina. Her responsibilities included ensuring safe work practices for the handling of chemicals, infectious agents and recombinant DNA. In addition, she assisted in the development of operating procedures and policies, audited work areas and programs and provided input for the design and commissioning of containment laboratories (BSL3/ABSL3). Prior to joining Berkley Life Sciences, she was the ES&H Director at Lovelace Respiratory Research Institute where she managed all ES&H programs including fire and life safety, OSHA safety, environmental programs, biological, radiation and chemical safety and emergency management.

Ms. Fox has extensive experience with industrial hygiene sampling, biosafety levels 1, 2 and 3, select agents and toxins, evaluating research protocols and providing input on laboratory design. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Occupational and Environmental Health Management from Ferris State University and a Master of Science degree in Public Health from the University of North Carolina.

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