



Dr Lisa Dorn, Research Director at DriverMetrics® provides Fleet Manager readers with five key principles in developing a positive safety culture

Developing a positive fleet safety culture in your organisation leads to lower collision risk

WHAT IS SAFETY CULTURE?

A positive safety culture means that an organisation sees safety as being an overriding priority. This can be observed in individual and group values, attitudes, perceptions, competencies, and patterns of behaviour that determine the commitment to, and the style and proficiency of, a company's health and safety management. Companies with a positive fleet safety culture are characterised by communications founded on mutual trust between the collective and individuals, by shared perceptions of the importance of safety, and by their willingness to implement fleet risk management interventions.

This moves us away from the unhelpful view that drivers cause elevated risks or it is the company's fault that crash rates are so high. Rather it is how drivers and company structure come together to behave in a way that is safe. It is a combination of behavioural, situational and management factors that determine collision risk and safety is everyone's responsibility – not just the driver.

Here are 5 key steps to implementing a positive fleet safety culture in your organisation:

1 DEMONSTRATE MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT

Commitment to fleet safety can be indicated by the proportion of resources (time, money and people) and support allocated to risk management. Therefore, the visible, active involvement of senior management in fleet health and safety is critical. Managers need to be seen to lead by example and should listen actively to what they are being told by employees, and take what they hear seriously.

2 DEVELOP PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

A fleet safety management system forms the base of a strong safety culture in any environment. Without clear policies and procedures, the elements of your management system cannot flourish which in turn will hinder the safety culture from improving.

Gaining broad representation from across the organisation to inform the development of your policies and procedures, can play an important role in informing the development of the system and achieving buy in from the start.

3 IMPLEMENT A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

It is essential that genuine two way communication is encouraged throughout the organisation. Whilst different organisations will approach this goal in contrasting ways, all members of staff need to understand the fleet safety policy, and every effort made to encourage conversations about fleet safety issues at all levels. This can include organisation-wide internal communications campaigns to ensuring that fleet safety is a regular agenda item at meetings at all levels.

4 SECURE EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT

Active employee participation in fleet safety is also important in order to build ownership of safety at all levels and exploit the unique knowledge that employees have of their own work and the risks they face when driving. At DriverMetrics® we help organisations engage with driver risk at the individual level via the use of personalised behavioural risk profiling and reporting. We repeatedly find this approach to encourage self-reflection and 'bottom-up' engagement in fostering a positive fleet safety culture.

5 TARGET INTERVENTIONS

Training plays a key role in ensuring that manager and employees are aware of the procedural elements of risk management. However, the research evidence clearly indicates that behavioural issues are the key contributor to crash involvement. The research, together with our work with hundreds of DriverMetrics® clients suggests the most effective means of mitigating behavioural risk is via face to face or e-learning interventions that are customised to the risk profile of individual drivers.