



The Road Safety Challenge

*Reducing Organizational Collisions through the
Creation of a Culture of Safe Driving*

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How can organizations create a culture where safe driving habits and choices are simply a natural part of the employee's job? How do we create an atmosphere where employees take pride in the fact that they drive safely?

It is not easy, nor is there a magic bullet; consider seatbelt use as an example. Through years of education and promotion, almost 90% of Canadians now wear their seatbelt every time they drive; in fact most feel naked or extremely uncomfortable – even guilty if their seatbelt is not on. Many organizations make wearing a seatbelt while driving a condition of employment and for good reason, seatbelts save lives. In fact, statistics show that if 100% of drivers wore their seatbelt every time they drove, fatality rates would decrease by 30%!

To create a culture of safe driving, organizations must be prepared to support long-term ongoing initiatives. Organizational goals and policies must reflect the importance of safe driving and senior executives must lead the way by example.

Enabling Roles

Creating or shifting culture is not easy and cannot be completed successfully overnight. No collision reduction program is likely to have lasting impact unless they are embedded within a supportive senior-level program. To succeed at creating an enduring culture of safe driving, senior administrators must take **“enabling roles”**:

- a. Provide a long-range plan which serves as a context for the company wide and regional driver safety improvement plans.

- b. Identify at least one systematic, research based process that the company will use to plan and implement driver improvement.
- c. Establish company policies and procedures that provide for continuous improvement, and differences between and among regions.
- d. Establish a framework for curriculum and instruction in the company.
- e. Model the desired behaviors for improvement within the head office.
- f. Establish expectations that support successful implementation of driver safety improvement.
- g. Establish a communication network between and among stakeholders to keep them informed about implementation and outcomes of the driver improvement program.
- h. Provide and manage head office resources to support driver improvement.
- i. Monitor and evaluate the company's improvement programs.
- j. Serve as facilitator and support for region-based driver improvement coaching.

In promoting effective driver improvement and culture building, it is the purpose and the role of the head office to pursue policies and actions that facilitate driver improvement and to change policies or actions that impose barriers to it.

Given this, regional supervisors also have a key role to play:

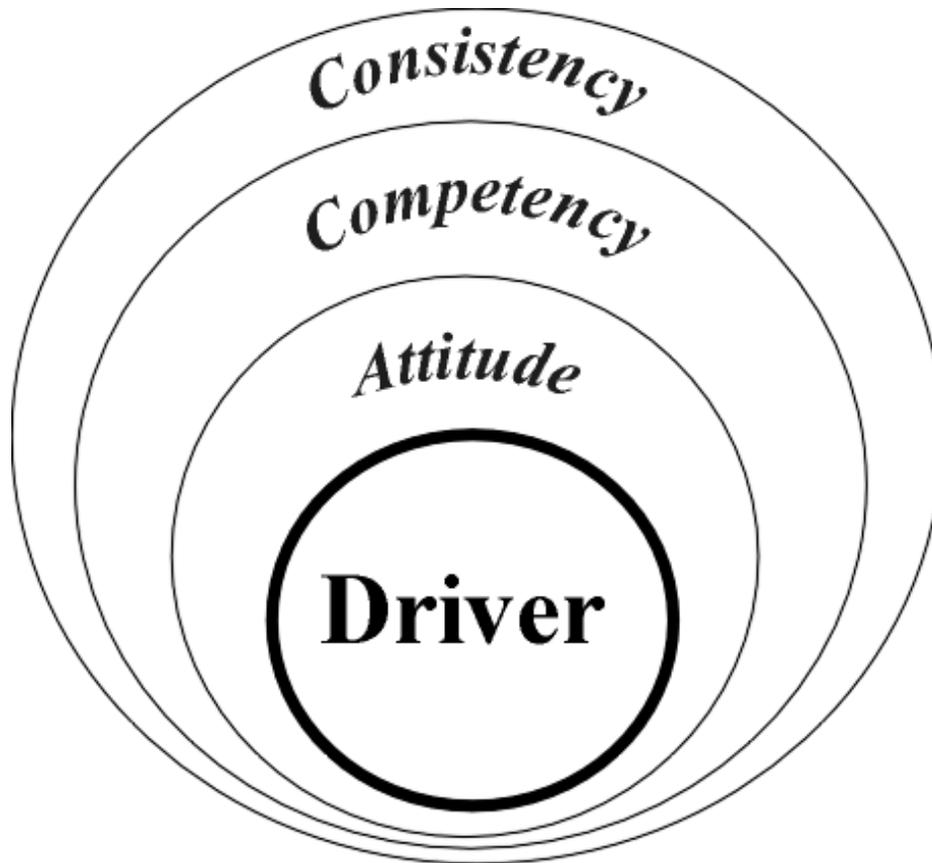
Regional Supervisors are essential to facilitating a culture of safe driving and continuous driver improvement in their areas. As the leaders of their regions, supervisors are responsible for the ethos of the region. He or she sets the professional expectations and creates a climate to sustain these expectations. In creating and sustaining an ethos for safe driving, the supervisor's attitude and actions can have a significant impact by creating an environment that nurtures the culture, and provides ongoing assistance and opportunities for driver growth.

Three activities that should characterize the supervisor are:

- a. Supervisors should be well read, informed, and professionally involved.
- b. Supervisors must personalize and model the new safe driving culture.
- c. Supervisors must actively foster professional discussion about safe driving principals.

By making safe driving an essential part of their own lives, supervisors encourage and model the importance of driver improvement. By showing that safe driving is a priority for themselves, through personal investments of time, energy and resources, supervisors are sending a clear message to their staffs.

Program Model



Once administrative support has been initiated and developed the focus can now move to the driver. Programs need to be built around the core competencies of Attitude, Competency and Consistency.

Attitude: Attitude is the most important aspect of safe driving. The attitude that the driver brings to the driver task may relate directly to driver performance on that trip.

Competency: Different localities, job requirements and vehicles require different driving skills. One of the goals of training programs is to ensure drivers have the appropriate driving competencies for the local situations and individual job requirement.

Consistency: The largest challenge driver's face is one of consistency - building a history of safe driving. Regardless of the knowledge, skills, experience or training, there are some days that we are better drivers than other days. Recognizing poorer days and providing strategies to compensate are important elements of the program.

Question: How do you move the theory into working reality?

Answer: The Road Safety Challenge

The Road Safety Challenge is designed to engage drivers in energy building activities and training sessions that assist and support their buy-in to the driver safety process. Through a Four-phase process, a culture of safe driving is initiated and supported. Over time, this culture becomes an enduring part of the organization.

Phase I: Getting the Big Picture

1. The Fleet Safety Vision

In the words of Stephen Covey, “Begin with the End in Mind”, for any fleet safety initiative to be successful clear goals and objectives must be laid out. A core vision for the future must be set. The initial goal would be to clarify what the organization’s fleet safety vision is, along with short and long term objectives and goals that will form the basis of the KPIs (Key Performance Indicators).

2. Gap Analysis

Once the objectives, goals and vision have been set, a full Gap Analysis of the corporation and your current practices can be initiated. This Gap Analysis would review:

- Current practice relative to the fleet safety vision, goals and objectives
- Alberta and Canadian Compliancy laws and regulations
- To determine if there is a core unification of fleet safety strategies and ideas. Does current practice have a core set of underlying beliefs and messages that are consistent through out the company?

Phase II: Building the Program

Once the Gap Analysis is complete, we can now start the journey towards creating the enduring fleet safety culture through a variety of programs, initiatives and activities. Some of which would include:

- Implementation Team – Program Champions
- Providing Employee Ownership in the Process
- Identification of Program Objectives
- Identification of Key Performance Indicators
- Short Term and Long Term Initiatives
- Measurement and Management Tools
- Assist in the development of programs that are a mix of Broad Brush Applications and Targeted Approaches to meet specific need

Taking the time to effectively plan and map out the fleet safety initiative is essential to its success. Improper planning leads to activities that are viewed by employees as unstructured, poorly thought out, “Flavour of the Month” programs. Employee buy in would be lost.

Phase III: Program Roll Out

The next challenge is the actual roll out. To help achieve employee buy in, energy building activities and programs are used to build employee enthusiasm and energy. The first and most important objective of the roll out is to get Senior Administration and most importantly, Supervisor buy in and commitment. Without a full and complete commitment from these groups, this initiative will fail. Given this commitment, some employee activities (above regular training) may include:

- Weekly challenges
- Tailgate topics
- Fun activities
- Stay the Course
- Celebrate Success
- Wearing of buttons or stickers
- Track, Measure and Adjust

Phase IV: Keeping the Edge

Keeping the edge revolves around changing external, extrinsic energy to internal, intrinsic energy that will form the foundation for an enduring culture of fleet safety. To do this, each person in the organization must personalize the process and make a commitment to the overall goal. To do this we need to:

- Create ongoing authentic and fierce discussion
- Have each individual personalize the vision
- Look for Vision Moments, Moments where people made the right decisions for the right reasons
- Bring New Members into the Culture through Coaching
- Take personal Action: In the words of “Fish” Find it, Live it, Coach it

Conclusion

The creation of culture is an on going work in progress, where administrative commitment, resource allocation and consistency of practice are essential elements towards success.

Margaret Mead once said that a small group of high motivated and dedicated people can change the world. That is where this process has to start with a small group of committed individuals who take ownership and leadership for the program and are supported by senior management.

There is no question that a planned program of culture building will lead to lives being saved, collision costs reduced and lost revenue minimized.

Foundational Tenets

A. Defensive Driving

1. A defensive driver acknowledges that people are human and will make mistakes. He realizes that while he has no control over the actions of others he takes steps to anticipate reasonable actions and then takes appropriate precautions.
2. While defensive drivers have no control over the weather and road conditions, a defensive driver is aware of conditions and takes appropriate action - even if it means not driving that day.
3. Defensive drivers acknowledge that even in the face of unanticipated situations such as missing road signs, non functioning traffic lights etc ... that does not relieve his responsibility to drive without collisions
4. A defensive driver yields the right-of-way and adjusts his driving to avoid collisions when necessary. The defensive driver understands that he has a moral and a legal obligation to avoid collisions. The defensive driver has a personal responsibility to drive safely and avoid collisions.
5. The defensive driver understands the importance of active driving over passive driving. He makes safe driving his job.
6. A defensive driver understands that he is human and that regardless of the knowledge, skills, experience or training, there are some days that he is a better driver than on other days. The defensive driver recognizes a poor driving day and moves into a more active role in driving.
7. A defensive driver is a life long learner; he upgrades his knowledge and skills on a regular basis. A defensive driver also has a responsibility to share new driving knowledge and skills with others in non-confrontational ways. A dialogue about safe driving is useful and progressive; admonishment is generally counter productive.

B. Adult Learning

1. An environment where employees feel safe and supported, where individual needs and uniqueness are honored, where abilities and life achievements are acknowledged and respected.
2. An environment that fosters intellectual freedom and encourages experimentation and creativity.
3. An environment where the head office treats employees as peers—accepted and respected as intelligent experienced adults whose opinions are listened to, honored, appreciated.
4. Self-directed learning, where employees take responsibility for their own learning. They work with head office to design individual learning programs that address what each person needs and wants to learn in order to function optimally in their profession.
5. Pacing or intellectual challenge. Optimal pacing is challenging people just beyond their present level of ability. If challenged too far beyond, people give up. If challenged too little, they become bored and learn little. Those adults who reported experiencing high levels of intellectual stimulation—to the point of feeling discomfort—grew more.
6. Active involvement in learning, as opposed to passively listening to lectures. Where employees and instructors interact and dialogue, where employees try out new ideas in the workplace, where exercises and experiences are used to bolster facts and theory, adults grow more.
7. Regular feedback mechanisms for employees to tell head office what works best for them and what they want and need to learn—and administration who hears and make changes based on employee input.

C. The Change Process

Change is most effective when employees:

1. Become aware of a need for improvement, through their analysis of their own observation-profile, and they make a written commitment to try new ideas in the workplace.
2. Modify workshop and in-service ideas to fit their individual work places and jobs.
3. Try the ideas and evaluate the effect.
4. Observe each other and analyze their own data.
5. They report their success or failure to their group.
6. They discuss problems and solutions regarding workplace issues.
7. They have access to a wide variety of approaches to learning
8. They learn in their own ways to set new goals for professional growth.
9. Have new structures and changes supported through a variety of mediums and methods.