

Transportation Safety

Training ADVISOR

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*New Issue Date - See Back for Details

Driver Wellness

A new you for the new year!

Why trainees forget what
they just learned and what
you can do about it

FMCSA limits scope of
'emergency' exemption

Information and resources to help your drivers operate safely



J. J. Keller
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In This Issue

Training Blueprint3

Learn the best ways to start the year off right with wellness best practices everyone can implement.

Training Handout4

Top tips for keeping drivers safer through healthy habits.

Test Your Knowledge5

Do your drivers know the best ways to stay healthy and alert on the road?

Why trainees forget what they just learned and what you can do about it6

These strategies can help drivers retain more information after training and apply that information safely.

FMCSA limits scope of 'emergency' exemption6

These changes apply to motor carriers and drivers who provide direct assistance during declared emergencies.

Expert Help7

What are some good guidelines for outlining a new wellness program for my company?



MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Don't forget the obvious: Driver-specific wellness tips

Most discussions about truck driver health are focused on a healthy diet, exercise, and a sufficient amount of sleep. These are excellent habits that any person can start, driver or non-driver, and everyone should try to practice these good habits all year long.

But there are other safety measures specific to drivers that are also important, and it's worth training drivers on these risks in addition to standard wellness practices.

1. **Cell phones:** Keep in mind that cell phone use is strictly regulated for commercial motor vehicle (CMV) drivers. Drivers are prohibited from holding a cell phone to conduct voice communications, dialing or answering a cell phone by using more than a single button, and from texting or leaving the driver's seat to reach for a phone. Drivers must pull over if they need to use their phones, or wait until they are stopped for an extended period.
2. **Seat belts:** All drivers and passengers must wear their seat belts at all times while the vehicle is in motion. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), seat belts saved nearly 15,000 lives in 2017 alone. Make sure drivers keep lap belts secure across the pelvis/hip (not the stomach) and shoulder belts secure across the rib cage and chest, away from the neck. These same rules apply to pregnant drivers.
3. **Vehicle condition:** All commercial motor vehicles must be in proper working order, including safety equipment. Trucks must be regularly inspected. It's also important to make sure that the driver is in the correct position — the seat, seat back, and steering wheel should all be at the appropriate distance for the driver to sit comfortably and safely. Mirrors need to be in the correct positions and all electronics should be functioning correctly.

Start the new year right with these safety basics, and encourage your drivers to hold each other accountable for wellness best practices on the road. ♦



Lucero Truskowski

Lucero Truskowski joined J. J. Keller & Associates, Inc. as an Associate Editor in 2022. Lucero edits, writes, and researches content on a variety of topics, including transportation, human resources, and driver training. She is currently earning a Master of Science (MS) in Professional Writing from New York University.



TRAINING BLUEPRINT — DRIVER WELLNESS

A new you for the new year

A healthy driver is a safe and alert driver, and there's no better time than the start of a new year to refresh some good habits. Achieving a healthy and safe lifestyle can be challenging when on the road, but it can be done.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 70 percent of long-haul truck drivers are obese, which is double the amount for the average American adult worker. Obesity comes with a wide array of health risks, which can result in a driver not being physically qualified to drive.

So, what can drivers do to prevent obesity and stay healthy? It all comes down to good daily habits:

1. Eating healthy.
2. Getting enough sleep.
3. Increasing activity levels.

A diet plan you can actually stick with

The secret to a long-term diet plan is choosing foods that are really tasty and that are still good for the body. Convenience goes a long way, too!

When on the road, drivers should choose **fruits and vegetables** in a variety of colors to go with meals and snacks. Leafy greens are great for overall health, and carrots, berries, apple slices, and pears make great quick snacks.

Drivers also need **whole grains**, which offer a great boost of energy and a long-term feeling of fullness. Some good examples include brown rice, oatmeal, and whole wheat pasta.

Good, lean **proteins** are another key piece of a healthy diet. Whether packing their own meals, eating at restaurants, or stopping at a gas station, drivers should choose good protein sources like poultry, seafood, rice and beans, eggs, nuts and seeds, and soy products/tofu. Beef and turkey jerky make great on-the-go snacks.

Dairy is another great way to get more protein and complete a well-rounded meal. Snacks like string cheese, a single-serve milk, and yogurt are great during long trips.

Although many people forget about it, **water** is also essential to a healthy diet. Drivers should drink 6-8 eight-ounce glasses of water a day to cleanse their systems, hydrate their bodies, and energize their minds.

TIP: Make sure your drivers understand that they should consult with a professional before starting any diet or exercise program.

Time to get physical!

Regular physical activity is important to a driver's overall health and fitness. When combined with proper diet, regular physical activity helps drivers maintain a healthy weight or lose weight (if needed), strengthen the muscles and bones, and increase mental and physical energy. Drivers should engage in a variety of activities for about two and half hours per week, including:

1. **Aerobic activities:** Walking, jogging, bicycling, or swimming.
2. **Resistance activities:** Weightlifting, using resistance bands, or doing pushups.
3. **Balance and stretching activities:** Yoga, dancing, or martial arts.

TIP: Discuss how a healthy lifestyle can be achieved on the road. Ask your drivers to share any healthy practices they currently follow.

Don't forget about sleep — just not while driving!

Adults need about **6-8 hours of uninterrupted sleep** per night to feel rested. A sleep loss of as little as two hours can negatively affect alertness and performance.

Drivers should try to establish routine sleep schedules when on the road and take steps to make their sleep environment comfortable. Avoiding fatigue is another key aspect to driver wellness that is often overlooked, yet highly important.

One last tip on mental wellness

Being socially isolated can have a negative impact on mental health, so drivers should be aware of strategies they can use to combat loneliness. Some good techniques are to:

1. Talk to family and friends over the phone,
2. Talk with people online in groups or discussion boards,
3. Interact with people while on the job,

Make sure drivers are aware of the mental health programs available to them, such as an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) your company offers or community mental health hotlines. ♦



TRAINING HANDOUT — DRIVER WELLNESS

Healthy drivers are SAFE drivers

Drink more water

Start each day with a 64-ounce supply of water and aim to drink all of it by the end of the day.



Walk twice a day

Try getting two short walks into your day by walking around the perimeter of a truck stop or rest area.



Eat healthy snacks and meals

Pack healthy snacks for your trip like string cheese, jerky, bananas, apples, low-fat milk, or hummus and crackers for an on-the-go boost.



Get enough sleep

Create a nighttime routine so your body knows when it's time to rest. Prepare for sleep with relaxing activities like reading, listening to music, or talking on the phone.



Limit alcohol intake

Heavy drinking weakens the immune system, which is not conducive to a healthy lifestyle. Limit alcohol to 1-2 drinks per day, or less.



Treat chronic health conditions

If you have a health condition, be sure to stick to your doctor's treatment plan.



Monitor mental health

Anxiety, depression, and loneliness can take their toll. Take advantage of the resources available to you. ♦





TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE — DRIVER WELLNESS

1. Which daily habits are good for overall wellness?
 - A. Eating healthy
 - B. Getting enough sleep
 - C. Increasing activity levels
 - D. All of the above

2. The average adult only needs 4-5 hours of uninterrupted sleep per night.
 - A. True
 - B. False

3. How many 8-oz glasses of water should you be drinking per day?
 - A. 2-4
 - B. 8-10
 - C. 6-8
 - D. 4-6

4. Being socially isolated during long trips on the road can have a negative effect on your mental health.
 - A. True
 - B. False

5. How much time per week should you dedicate to some type of physical activity?
 - A. One hour
 - B. Two and a half hours
 - C. Three and a half hours
 - D. Thirty minutes

NAME: _____ **DATE:** _____



Why trainees forget what they just learned and what you can do about it

What does a German psychologist from the late 19th century have in common with a roomful of driver trainees?

If you're waiting for a punchline, there isn't one.

Hermann Ebbinghaus theorized why many of us forget what we learn in training. He found that most data is lost within the first few days and the rate of loss eventually tapers off. This exponential loss of memory that appears as a big dip on a graph is known as the memory curve.

The memory curve theory explains why key points are often lost shortly after driver training. Unfortunately, forgotten training content can be a safety risk. Understanding this phenomenon provides the key to counteracting its effects.



Variables that affect memory

Ebbinghaus believed that the level of retention depends on two factors:

1. **Relevancy:** Stronger memories last longer than weaker ones. Attendees must view the points presented as highly relevant to their positions.
2. **Time:** Some studies show individuals forget an average of 70 percent of training materials within the first 24 hours, and others indicate an average of 90 percent is lost within the first month.

Apply what you learned

What employees do after training is just as important as what they do during training. If employees do not use the information provided during a training session, they will lose it. Consider the following best practices to help employees migrate lessons into their long-term memory:

- Use a multiple-choice quiz. The quiz is thought to make the entire training stronger, not just those points provided in the quiz.
- Have employees use the new skill or tip as soon as possible, so it becomes a part of their everyday routine.
- Create reminders of the lesson shortly after the event since most material is lost within a week, such as posters, short tips in the form of emails or texts, and highly visual handouts.

Minor tweaks

Countering the forgetting curve does not have to involve a major revamp of your employee training. Minor changes in the presentation and proactive follow-up materials may result in a more effective program. ♦



Key to remember: To reduce the chance of forgetting key points in training, steer your drivers through the memory curve. Make presentations engaging, include relevant materials, and apply training to everyday activities.

FMCSA limits scope of 'emergency' exemption

Motor carriers that help out during government-declared emergencies are no longer exempted from most DOT safety regulations.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has revised its emergency-response exemption to narrow its scope. Most drivers providing aid during a government-declared emergency are still exempt from hours-of-service limits but not from other safety mandates like driver-qualification or vehicle-inspection rules.

"Most emergencies justify allowing carriers and drivers who provide direct assistance to the emergency response to receive temporary relief from the normal hours of service (HOS) limits," the agency wrote. "However, other safety regulations ... often have no direct bearing on the

motor carrier's ability to provide direct assistance to the emergency relief effort."

The change to the rules in 49 CFR section 390.23 was published on October 13, 2023, and went into effect on December 12, 2023.

The exemption applies to motor carriers and drivers providing "direct assistance" during a declared "emergency" as those terms are defined in section 390.5.

Under the previous rules, drivers who delivered critical supplies or provided other types of relief during a government-declared emergency were automatically exempt from most of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) as found in 49 CFR 390-399. This included rules for medical certification, hours of service, vehicle inspection and maintenance, and so on.

Under the rules that went into effect on December 12, the types of mandates the driver and motor carrier are exempt from will depend on the nature of the emergency declaration:

- A presidential declaration of emergency will continue to exempt drivers from most FMCSRs for up to 30 days.
- An emergency declared by a state governor or the FMCSA itself will only exempt drivers from the hours-of-service limits in sections 395.3 and 395.5 for up to 14 days.
- A local emergency will exempt drivers from those same hours-of-service limits but only for up to 5 days.

Motor carriers will be able to ask for an extension by emailing the FMCSA at a dedicated email address. When an extension is granted, motor carriers continuing to use the exemption may be required to report their usage to the FMCSA. ♦



Next Month's Topic: Railroad Crossings

As a professional driver, it's important that you know how to safely and legally deal with railroad crossings. ♦



Expert Help: Question of the Month

Question: What are some good guidelines for outlining a new wellness program for my company?

Answer: To be effective, your wellness program should focus on areas of well-being that are helpful and meaningful to your workers.

To help you determine what you want your program to look like, you can use data and employee input to determine priorities. Data might come from:

- **Health plan utilization:** What are the most significant health problems faced by your employees? Your insurer or third-party administrator can provide aggregate data.
- **Corporate surveys:** Ask employees for insights into programs they would find beneficial and ask them what they would like to change with your current program.
- **Wellness committee and wellness champions:** Ask what they've observed over the past year, and what they'd like to see happen in the future.
- **National statistics:** National statistics can be used in conjunction with employee surveys, wellness committee feedback, and biometric data from workplace wellness screenings to help you set wellness program priorities and create a healthy workplace environment.

After reviewing the data and employee input, consider how to target the conditions and health concerns that impact the greatest number of employees. Then set goals to address the areas of greatest concern.

Ideally, your goals will be:

- **Specific:** What needs to be done?
- **Measurable:** How will it be assessed?
- **Attainable:** Is this something your company is capable of doing?
- **Relevant:** Why is this being done? and
- **Time-bound:** When will this be done? ♦

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

Your December 2023 newsletter is now renamed January 2024. Each subsequent issue will follow this publishing update, allowing you to take full advantage of valuable content for the coming month. You will still receive the same number of issues according to your subscription. Questions? Call 1-800-327-6868.



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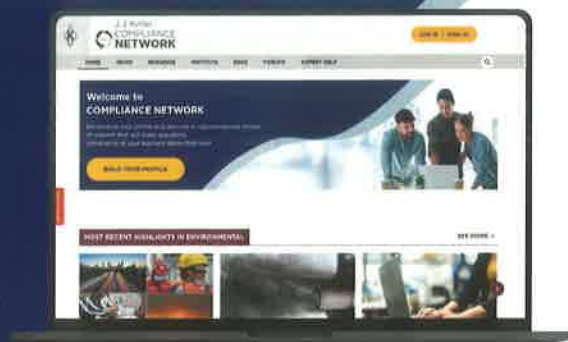
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