

Transportation Safety

Training ADVISOR

May 2025

Defensive driving

Eyes on the road, always

Data shows lower random
drug & alcohol failure rates

Logs and tires: CVSA
Roadcheck focuses revealed

Watch for distracted drivers

Information and resources to help your drivers operate safely



J. J. Keller
& Associates, Inc.
Since 1953

In This Issue

Training Blueprint3

Get your drivers on the road to accident-free travel.

Training Handout4

Don't underestimate the art of speed and space management.

Test Your Knowledge5

Keep your drivers' defense strategy up with this quick quiz to test their knowledge.

New data shows lower random drug and alcohol failure rates6

Check out the latest industry trends!

CVSA Roadcheck focuses revealed6

Make sure your drivers' logs and tires are all up to par to avoid violations.

Expert Help7

Is there a grace period for a driver to keep driving while waiting on sleep study results?



MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Defensive driving — You vs. them

The four basic elements of defensive driving that your drivers can control are:

1. Good vision,
2. Heightened awareness,
3. Proper speed and space management, and
4. The right attitude.

A defensive driver should keep a constant visual scan, recognize potential hazards, decide on an appropriate response, and carry out the appropriate response. These are all things your drivers are personally responsible for.

But what about *other* drivers?

Looking out for distracted drivers

No matter how vigilant or how well trained your drivers are, sometimes they aren't the ones to worry about. Other drivers on the road may be one of the biggest risks good defensive drivers face. An effective way to counter this risk is to teach your drivers how to identify a distracted driver.

Distracted drivers may:

- Linger at intersections,
- Change speed erratically or make sudden stops,
- Make sudden moves and brake suddenly,
- Tailgate,
- Drift between lanes, and/or
- Use a cell phone.

How to avoid distracted drivers

The best way for your drivers to stay safe is to recognize and react appropriately to distracted drivers. Using the four basic elements of defensive driving will allow your drivers to:

1. *See* the distracted driver,
2. *Take note* of others' driving patterns without getting distracted themselves,
3. *Slow down* and allow enough *space* between them and the distracted driver, and
4. *Focus on their own safety* and getting out of the situation. ♦



Lucero Truszkowski

Lucero Truszkowski 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 holds a Master of Science (MS) in Professional Writing from New York University.



TRAINING BLUEPRINT — DEFENSIVE DRIVING

On the road to accident-free travel

It's important that drivers be prepared for the many challenges and dangers of the road. That preparation might be the difference between an accident and returning home safely.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 5,700 large trucks were involved in fatal crashes in 2021, while 60,375 were involved in injury crashes and 11,468 were involved in towaway crashes.

One great way for your drivers to avoid accidents is by being good defensive drivers, meaning they:

- Scan the road and watch for changes,
- Observe the entire situation,
- Recognize potential hazards,
- Decide on the appropriate response, and
- Safely follow through with the plan.

TIP: Consider using a short video to introduce your session.

Visual scanning

Visual scanning is a key component when it comes to avoiding hazards. Scanning means continually surveying the entire area ahead, to the sides, and behind the vehicle. Drivers should never stare at a single object or in a single direction for very long.

Scanning ahead. Drivers should scan the entire sight ahead, looking 12-15 seconds forward. On the highway, this is equal to about a one-quarter of a mile, and in the city, this is equal to 2-3 blocks. Scanning ahead gives drivers time to:

- Spot a problem,
- Decide how to react,
- Assess traffic conditions, and
- Maneuver out of a potential situation.

Scanning the sides. Drivers should scan to the left and right using the vehicle's mirrors and side windows. It's especially important to scan the sides:

- At intersections,
- When changing lanes or merging, or
- At any other place where someone could unexpectedly dart into traffic.

Scanning behind. Drivers should use their mirrors to monitor the back of the vehicle. Be sure drivers are:

- Watching for vehicles and potential hazards,
- Checking load and cargo securement, and
- Staying alert to tire problems.

TIP: Discuss the role visual scanning plays in anticipating and reacting to dangerous situations.

The big merge

The weight of the vehicle's load as well as the on-ramp's length and degree of turn will determine how much time is needed to get the vehicle up to speed to safely merge with oncoming traffic. The size of the vehicle will determine how much space is needed to enter traffic.

When entering traffic, drivers should:

- Evaluate how much traffic there is,
- Signal early,
- Watch for an opening,
- Build up speed to merge smoothly,
- Check all mirrors, and
- Watch for oncoming traffic.

When leaving an expressway, drivers should:

- Signal and get into the exit lane as soon as possible,
- Check all mirrors to monitor the speed of traffic behind, and
- Shift down to a lower gear and take the exit.

Intersections

Crossing and clearing an intersection with a large vehicle can be difficult because of the vehicle's additional length and slow rate of acceleration.

At an intersection or crossing, drivers should stop and then proceed slowly, allowing for an additional stop before crossing. They should look left, then right, then left again before pulling into the intersection. ♦



TIP: Conclude your training with a question-and-answer session.



TRAINING HANDOUT — DEFENSIVE DRIVING

The art of speed and space management

Proper speed and space management allow a driver enough room to react appropriately to all potential situations.

Speed management includes driving at the posted speed and reducing speed by at least:

- One-third when it's raining, and
- One-half when driving in snow or ice.

When driving in fog, travel at a speed slow enough that you can stop within the distance you can see ahead.

Space management includes allowing enough space ahead, behind, and to the sides of the vehicle for the driver to adjust when traffic conditions change.

Ahead

In good traffic conditions, the amount of space should be:

- One second for each 10 feet of vehicle length at speeds below 40 mph.
- An additional second of following distance at speeds greater than 40 mph.

Behind

When being tailgated (followed too closely), drivers should stay to the right, slow down, increase following distance, and avoid quick lane changes.

To the sides

To ensure enough space to the sides of the vehicle, drivers should avoid:

- Hugging the center the line,
- Hugging the right side of the road, or
- Traveling alongside other vehicles. ♦



This page may be duplicated for your internal use



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE — DEFENSIVE DRIVING

1. Being a defensive driver means
 - A. Watching for changes
 - B. Observing the entire situation
 - C. Recognizing potential hazards
 - D. All of the above

2. Good visual scanning means staring in a single direction for a long time.
 - A. True
 - B. False

3. When entering traffic, drivers should:
 - A. Maintain a slow and steady pace, regardless of the posted speed
 - B. Stop at the entrance and wait for an opportunity
 - C. Build up speed to merge smoothly
 - D. Merge into traffic confidently and expect others to move

4. Speed management includes driving at the posted speed and reducing speed in inclement weather.
 - A. True
 - B. False

5. How much space should drivers leave for each 10 feet of vehicle length at speeds below 40 mph?
 - A. One second
 - B. Two seconds
 - C. Three seconds
 - D. Four seconds ♦

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

This page may be duplicated for your internal use



New data shows lower random drug and alcohol failure rates

Random drug and alcohol positive usage rates were lower in 2023 than in 2022 and 2021, according to the 2023 Drug and Alcohol Testing Survey.

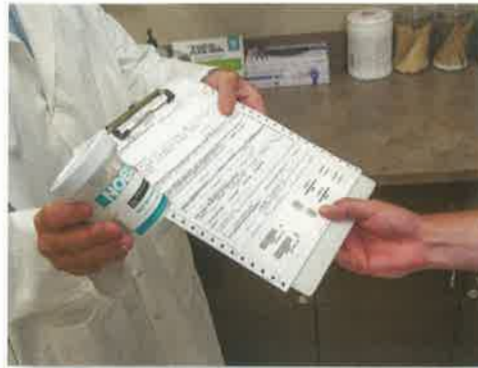
The estimated drug and alcohol testing failure rates were the result of an annual survey of randomly selected motor carriers. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) looks at drug and alcohol testing trends when determining minimum random drug and/or alcohol testing rates.

FMCSA's annual report includes data on random, pre-employment, reasonable suspicion, post-crash, and return-to-duty testing.

Random drug testing results

The 2023 estimated random drug positive use rate was 0.8 percent. In comparison, the random drug positive usage rate for 2022 was 0.9 percent and for 2021 was 1.2 percent.

For drug testing, the term "positive usage rate" refers to the use of any of the five drugs found during a DOT drug panel and includes refusals to test, which are treated as positives.



Random alcohol testing results

The 2023 estimated random alcohol usage rate was 0.05 percent. This marks a decrease in the random alcohol usage rate from the prior two years when the 2022 rate was 0.29 percent and the 2021 rate was 0.12 percent.

For alcohol testing, the usage rate applies to drivers with a blood alcohol content level of 0.04 or higher and includes refusals to test, which are treated as positives.

Participants

There were roughly 1,212,581 non-exempt carriers eligible for selection into the 2023 survey sample. Surveys were sent to over 9,000 randomly selected carriers, most of which were involved in commercial activities.

Of the carriers that responded:

- 3,414 carriers responded for random controlled substance testing, and
- 2,981 carriers responded for random alcohol testing.

Motor carriers are required to provide data on their Part 382 testing program by submitting a completed Management Information System (MIS) form by March 15 of the year selected. ♦

Logs and tires: CVSA Roadcheck focuses revealed

The Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) focuses for the 2025 International Roadcheck are **drivers' record of duty status (RODS)** and **vehicle tires**. Running from May 13-15, CVSA-certified law enforcement personnel across Mexico, the U.S., and Canada will examine motor vehicles to verify state, federal, provincial, and territorial regulatory compliance.

Focus 1: RODS

This year's focus on hours-of-service (HOS) limits, and specifically false RODS, highlight the importance of accurate records to ensure there are no fatigued drivers on the road. Failure to retain, record, or complete the logs, or knowingly falsifying logs, is both an out-of-service violation and a prosecutable offense.

During a driver out-of-service violation, the driver is restricted from operating a commercial vehicle until the

violation is rectified. Specific to HOS violations, the out-of-service restriction may be temporary and only require the accumulation of enough time off to resume driving. During the inspection for RODS/HOS compliance, inspectors will check for:

- Electronic logging device tampering;
- Ghost drivers;
- Improper use of personal conveyance driving and other exceptions (e.g., adverse driving conditions); and
- Recording off-duty time while performing work for a carrier.

Officers are always available to help drivers and carriers manage their specific HOS regulation requirements.

Focus 2: Vehicle tires

Proper tire maintenance is critical for safe transportation. Tire failure is a hazard to everyone on the road and

comes with costly/ time consuming consequences if ignored.

If officers find a vehicle out-of-service violation during the inspection, the vehicle will be stopped from operating until all violations are fixed. During the inspection for safe tire compliance, inspectors will check for:

- Low tread depth,
- Audible air leaks,
- Flat tires,
- Bulges in the side wall,
- Items lodged between dual tires,
- Exposed belt material or casing ply,
- Tread or sidewall separation, and
- Any improper repairs.

About Roadcheck

International Roadcheck is a three-day commercial motor vehicle (CMV) inspection event designed to educate and spread awareness about motor vehicle safety. Inspections will take place at weigh/inspection stations, during mobile patrols, and at temporary sites during the 72-hour inspection event.

Inspectors will perform as many Level I inspections as possible. This is a complete inspection of the driver and vehicle, and will result in the vehicle being issued a three-month CVSA decal if no critical violations are discovered. Unsuccessful inspections could result in a vehicle or driver being placed out of service. ♦



Expert Help: Question of the Month

Question: We are an interstate carrier with drivers, CDL & Non-CDL, who operate CMVs. Our new hire went for a physical and the doctor requested a sleep study before issuing a med card. The appointments are out 1-2 months. Is there a grace period for the driver to obtain the study so that he can drive while waiting for the sleep study & results?

Answer: If the driver has a current med card that is not expired, the driver can use it until this exam is given a final disposition by the examiner. If the driver's med card expires before this is figured out, he is medically unqualified. A pending status is good for 45 days, meaning the exam is not closed out for 45 days. If the driver is unable to provide the examiner with the results of a sleep study before 45 days, which sounds like is the case, this exam is voided as incomplete, and the driver would need a new exam.

The driver can also go for a second opinion if he wants, but he must list everything under the health history as he did on the first exam. He doesn't have to share the pending status of the first exam with the second examiner.

It comes down to how much time is left on the current med card. ♦



Expert Help

Your subscription to this publication gives you access to our Expert Help feature. Get answers to your toughest compliance questions from our team of experts by emailing us, privately and securely, at: asktheexpertprint@jkkeller.com. On average, our experienced experts provide an answer in less than two business hours.



Next Month's Topic: Hours-of-service rules

The hours-of-service regulations, located in Part 395 of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs), limit the number of hours an individual operating a commercial motor vehicle can drive, as well as the number of allowable on-duty hours. The main goal of the hours-of-service regulations is to keep fatigued drivers off the road. ♦

Copyright 2025 J. J. Keller & Associates, Inc.

Neither the *Transportation Safety Training Advisor* nor any part thereof may be reproduced without the written permission of J. J. Keller. Government regulations change constantly, therefore, J. J. Keller cannot assume responsibility or be held liable for any losses associated with omissions, errors, or misprintings in this publication. This publication is designed to provide reasonably accurate information and is sold with the understanding that J. J. Keller is not engaged in rendering legal, accounting, or other professional services. If legal or other expert advice is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

EDITOR: Lucero Truszkowski

ISSN 2688-1616

GST R123-317687

(75568)



J. J. Keller & Associates, Inc.®

3003 Breezewood Lane, P.O. Box 368
Neenah, Wisconsin 54957-0368

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

PRSR STD
U.S. Postage

PAID

J. J. Keller &
Associates, Inc.®



ISO 9001:2008 Certified
ISO 14001:2015 Certified
ISO 27001:2013 Certified
ISO 45001:2018 Certified

75568

Join an Entire **NETWORK** of Safety & Compliance Expertise...

Become a member of **COMPLIANCE NETWORK**
and gain access to J. J. Keller's industry-leading
safety and compliance content – custom-tailored
to your exact regulatory needs.



MEMBERS ENJOY THESE VALUABLE BENEFITS:

- **PERSONALIZED REGULATORY CONTENT**
for workplace safety, transportation, environment,
IIR, and other markets.
- **NEWS & TRENDING ISSUES** relevant to your
industry, area(s) of operation, and more.
- **J. J. KELLER INSTITUTE**, an expansive collection
of articles, videos, and interactive exercises
spanning 120+ compliance topics.
- **UNPRECEDENTED ACCESS TO EXPERTS** through
question submissions, one-on-one phone or video
consultations, and in-depth research requests.
- **AND MORE**



Build Your Profile and Start Getting Personalized Content Today
Visit JJKellerComplianceNetwork.com