

Delivery Driver Safety

Delivery driving, including food delivery, wholesale trade, retail trade, couriers and messengers, and self-employed drivers, is a growing vocation. The job market for delivery drivers is increasing at a rate of 5% a year. In fact, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are already over 1.5 million delivery jobs as of 2019, and they expect this number to increase by 75,000 jobs over the next 10 years.

These drivers face many exposures over the course of the day. The highest rate of injuries occurs from material handling and vehicle accidents, but other exposures, such as crime and slips and falls, are other major concerns.



Safe Driving

Speed is a common contributing factor for driver accidents. Although commissions are an appealing way to increase productivity, they have the potential to incentivize employees to drive carelessly. Commissioned drivers have an increased tendency to speed, perform rolling stops, weave in traffic, and drive recklessly. Consideration should be given to paying drivers by the hour. Any loss in productivity will be made up in asset protection, fewer loss time injuries, maintenance costs, and fuel economy.

Telematics is an emerging best-in-class control in many delivery fleets. Not only do telematics provide real-time GPS tracking of your drivers, it also allows business owners to monitor driver behavior. Most systems will alert drivers and owners of speeding, fast accelerations, harsh driving, hard breaking, and seatbelt usage. Many also have software dashboards that provide a grading system based on overall driving performance. This rating can be used for driver coaching as well as positive recognition.

Material Handling

Look for ways to decrease the material handling exposure by providing aids like carts, stair climbing hand trucks, or four-wheel hand trucks for heavier items. Ramps are often a necessity; however, loading and unloading ramps pose a strain hazard. Hydraulic, aluminum, or lightweight ramps are preferred. Appropriate carts and ramps will not only reduce injuries, they have the potential to increase productivity.

Proper lifting techniques are key to accident prevention. Delivery drivers should be trained upon hire, as well as periodically thereafter, to ensure they understand proper lifting techniques. Elevators, hoists, fork trucks, pallet jacks, and other material-handling equipment should be used to prevent excessive bending and straining.

Slip, Trip, and Falls

There are many contributing factors to slips, trips, and falls for delivery drivers. Proper guarding should be provided in dock areas, or in any opening or platform that has a four-foot drop in elevation. General housekeeping is a key to preventing falls. Empty pallets, shrink wrap,

strapping bands, and other clutter are leading housekeeping issues that result in employee falls. Loading and unloading areas should remain free of this debris. Make trash receptacles readily available and formulate a housekeeping program to prevent debris from accumulating.

Falls away from your premises are also a common concern. When entering or leaving the cab of a vehicle, three points of contact should be maintained at all times. Appropriate slip-resistant shoes should be worn by all delivery personnel. Ramps should be maintained in good condition and have slip-resistant coating. If drivers see any major fall hazards such as potholes, defective stairs, or broken concrete, you should address this with your customer.

Delivery Driver Security

Drivers should always be aware of their surroundings and avoid areas that aren't well lit. Try to avoid nighttime deliveries, but if they're unavoidable, make sure your customers provide a well-lit lot and entrance for your employees. Drivers must be alert for vehicles that are following them or people loitering around the delivery area. Cash on hand should be minimized, and drivers should be discouraged from taking cash payments. Drivers should always park their vehicles as close as possible to the delivery entrance, and time spent in the rear of the truck should be minimized.

Drivers shouldn't carry any weapons as they can be used against them in a struggle. Drivers should know their routes and where they're going before making a delivery. Driving around lost or stopping to ask for directions is the number-one cause of car jackings. Vehicles should never be left running, and they should be locked at all times.

If you'd like more help protecting your delivery exposure, please reach out to West Bend's Loss Control team for an onsite consultation with one of our highly-trained consultants.

