

# Motor vehicle safety for employers and employees



Driving might be the most important part of your safety program if your employees spend most of their workday on the road.

## Guidelines for an effective driver safety program

Managing driver safety starts with a commitment from the top. An effective driver safety program helps to ensure that employees drive safely, and that vehicles are properly maintained. Be sure to:

- **Develop a written vehicle safety policy.** Tell employees, in writing, what you expect of them when they are drivers and passengers. Employees should also acknowledge, in writing, that they have read and understood vehicle safety policies and procedures.
- **Check workers' driving records.** Check employees' driving records before they get behind the wheel and annually thereafter. Screen those who have poor driving records.
- **Investigate accidents.** Ensure that all vehicle accidents are properly reported and investigated.
- **Keep vehicles maintained.** Develop procedures that ensure vehicle safety inspections and maintenance are completed on regular schedules. Have employees immediately report mechanical problems to their supervisors.
- **Reward and discipline.** Recognize employees who have exemplary driving records. Make it clear to

employees that those who violate safety policies will be disciplined.

- **Invest in education and training.** Ensure that employees understand vehicle safety policy and highway safety rules when they're hired. All employees should have the opportunity to periodically update their knowledge and skills.
- **Know the rules.** The Oregon Vehicle Code Book has Oregon's requirements for vehicle registration, driver licensing, and rules of the road. Oregon OSHA's motor-vehicle safety requirements apply to:
  - General industry (Subdivision 2/N, 437-002-0223)
  - Construction (Subdivision 3/O, 1926.601)
  - Agriculture (Subdivision 4/U: 437-004-3410)
  - Forest activities (Subdivision 7/F)

## Top driver errors resulting in motor vehicle crashes in Oregon

1. Failed to avoid stopped or parked vehicle ahead
2. Failure to yield right of way
3. Driving too fast for conditions
4. Inattention
5. Following too closely

*Source: Oregon Department of Transportation, 2023*

## Reminders for all drivers

### Wear safety belts

All Oregon drivers and passengers must use safety belts (limited exemptions are allowed under ORS 811.215) and vehicle owners must keep safety belts working properly. A properly worn safety belt also holds you against your seat so your vehicle's airbag has room to inflate around your body during a crash.

### Stay focused on the road

Remember, using a hand-held mobile device to talk or text while driving is against the law in Oregon. Drivers must use a hands-free accessory.

### Stay alert

Drowsiness increases your risk of a crash. Signs that you need to stop and rest include difficulty focusing or keeping your head up, frequent blinking or yawning, and drifting in your lane. Get plenty of sleep before leaving on a trip and drive only during the hours you are normally awake.



### Don't drive impaired

Alcohol, certain prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, and illegal drugs can all impair a person's ability to drive safely. Drivers who have a blood-alcohol level of 0.08 percent or more are considered intoxicated under Oregon law.

### Keep your cool

Some drivers will do almost anything to get to their destination — tailgating, weaving in traffic, and ignoring traffic lights and the rights of other drivers. Their frustration levels are high and their level of concern for other motorists is low. If you encounter an aggressive driver, concentrate on your driving and make every attempt to get out of the way.

### Watch out for pedestrians

Pedestrians have the right of way at all intersections, even those that do not have painted crosswalks.

### Secure tools and equipment

Unsecured and poorly secured items can become airborne and can harm you, your passengers, or those in vehicles behind you. Make sure such items are properly stored and secured — inside and outside your vehicle.



## Prepare for emergencies

Does the vehicle have what you need in case of a roadside emergency? Consider items such as:

- Flashlight
- Reflective safety vest
- Light sticks
- Tire inflator or sealant
- Reflective triangles or flares
- First aid kit
- Batteries
- Water
- Gloves
- Blanket or jacket
- Jumper cables
- Ice scraper
- Cell phone charger

If you have vehicle trouble, move to the right shoulder or emergency stopping area. Turn on your hazard lights to warn other traffic. If possible, stay in or near your vehicle on the side away from traffic.

## More information

- 🔗 [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#)
- 🔗 [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health - Vehicle safety](#)
- 🔗 [Network of Employers for Traffic Safety](#)
- 🔗 [Federal OSHA](#)
- 🔗 [Oregon Department of Transportation](#)



Visit Oregon OSHA

## Workers

Your employer cannot retaliate against you for reporting a workplace health or safety concern or violation. For more information about your rights, visit the Oregon OSHA website.