Background

Establishing a meaningful, effective and realistic driver selection program is a vital component to the operation of any motor vehicle fleet, whether it is a coast-to-coast interstate operation or a small incidental fleet of sales vehicles. By placing sufficient emphasis on selecting the best available driver, a company helps to avoid future financial losses resulting from accidents and abuse of vehicles.

The opportunity to select the right person for the position will largely depend on management’s ability to develop job standards that reflect the prerequisites and skills necessary for acceptable job performance. This process will establish the standard against which you will evaluate a driver’s ability to fulfill the job requirements. Job descriptions should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis and whenever changes are made to the position. Having a prepared job description will also make recruiting drivers much easier.

The driver selection process should include several steps such as:

- Driver’s application form
- Interview
- Drivers license verification
- Reference check
- Motor vehicle record (MVR) review
- Physical examination
- Road test
- Written test (optional)

By using these elements consistently, you should be able to determine which applicant is the most qualified to fill the position. Applicants that consistently show poor results in the selection process are more prone to be problems later. The following suggestions should help you select a driver who will be a valuable asset to your business.

Elements of Driver Selection

Driver’s Application Form

The driver’s application form should be designed to gather information on the applicant’s drivers license(s), driving experience, accident record, traffic violations, past employment (3 years; 10 years for drivers required to have a commercial drivers license), education and physical history. The only questions that should appear on the application form are those pertinent to the driver’s ability to satisfactorily perform the job.
Motor carriers subject to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSR) are required to obtain specific information on the application form. For companies not subject to the FMCSR or for incidental fleets, you may want to suggest to the human resources department that applications for positions involving driving include the following information:

- **Driving experience** – Applicant’s past driving experience and the type of license held and in what state(s).
- **Familiarity with specific types of vehicles** – The type of vehicle(s) the applicant has operated in the past.
- **Past driving record** – Specific information on their driving record, including convictions (do not ask about arrests that did not result in convictions), and any driver safety awards received, such as safe driver awards.

**Interview**

Personally interview the applicant to review in detail job requirements and the applicant’s qualifications. The interview should be used to resolve any questions regarding the information obtained or omitted on the application form. Discuss the applicant’s background and experience in a relaxed environment, encouraging the applicant to express their feelings about their qualifications and background.

**Driver’s License Verification**

Personally check and review the applicant’s driver’s license to determine if he/she is qualified and license to operate the type of vehicle(s) in your fleet. Check the classes listed on the license as well as any restrictions and the expiration date.

**Reference Check**

A check should be made with the applicant’s previous employers to develop information about the driver’s general character and professional ability. Factors such as length of employment; job performed, including operation of vehicles; accident record; ability to get along with others; and whether the employer would re-hire the individual should be included. You should consult with legal council to determine the types of questions that are appropriate.

The reference check can be completed over the phone or by letter. The driver’s file should verify that these checks were made with record of the response received. Motor carriers subject to the FMCSR are required to investigate the driver’s employment record for the preceding three years.

**Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) Review**

A copy of the driver’s MVR should be obtained and evaluated against established criteria for an acceptable MVR. Please review the Loss Control Technical Bulletin 2100 *Reviewing Motor Vehicle Records* for additional information on reviewing MVR’s.
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Physical Examination

The physical fitness of a driver should be considered prior to placing an applicant in a driving position. A licensed physician or industrial clinic should complete the physical examinations. The examining physician should be aware of the physical and emotional demands placed on the driver and the requirements of the job so that a determination can be made whether or not the driver can perform the job. You should consult your company attorney on how and when physical examinations should be completed in relation to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Motor carriers subject to the FMCSR are required to have their drivers successfully complete a required medical examination initially and at least every 24 months thereafter. Drivers in this category are also required to submit to testing for certain controlled substances.

Road Test

A road test is one of the best ways to determine if drivers can perform the job expected of them. The test should be conducted in the same type of vehicle that the driver will be assigned to drive and the test should be long enough to cover a variety of driving situations. The test should not establish a passing or failing grade, but should indicate the driver's competent areas and weak points. This process will allow you to determine supplementary training needs. Copies of the results of the road test should be maintained in the driver qualification file.

Written Tests

Some companies make use of commercially available intelligence and psychological tests, or company-developed tests on driving rules and regulations. If you choose to conduct such types of testing, extreme care must be taken to ensure that the tests are not discriminatory and clearly associated with the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully fill the position.

Motor carriers subject to the FMCSR are no longer required to administer a written test to prospective drivers. Even though this is the case, companies still have the obligation to instruct drivers about the FMCS regulations. A written test could be used as part of your training program. Under the FMCSR, drivers must be conversant with the regulations and the employer must require driver compliance.

Conclusion

Selecting the right individual to drive your company vehicle will help to avoid future financial losses resulting from accidents and abuse of vehicles. In setting up a driver selection policy, it is crucial that legal counsel review the policy for conformance to accepted legal procedure before the policy is implemented.

IMPORTANT NOTICE - The information and suggestions presented by Philadelphia Indemnity Insurance Company in this Technical Bulletin are for your consideration in your loss prevention efforts. They are not intended to be complete or definitive in identifying all hazards associated with your business, preventing workplace accidents, or complying with any safety related, or other, laws or regulations. You are encouraged to alter them to fit the specific hazards of your business and to have your legal counsel review all of your plans and company policies.