LOSS CONTROL TECHNICAL BULLETIN

REVIEWING MOTOR VEHICLE RECORDS (MVRs)

Background

A driver’s past driving record provides one of the best indications of his or her future performance as a safe, reliable driver. Drivers that have a history of accidents or traffic violations are likely to continue that trend. Statistics show that drivers with two or more accidents or violations in a three year period are at least 2½ times more likely to have an accident than a driver with a clean driving record.

If you are considering hiring an individual to drive your trucks, cars or their own personal vehicle on company business, reviewing their motor vehicle record (MVR) is a valuable tool in evaluating their suitability for employment and in controlling transportation-related loss sources.

The fact that MVR’s do not identify all accidents or traffic violations does not diminish their importance. You may question a clear MVR, but a bad driving record is generally an indication of poor driving habits.

Types of Violations

Violations vary in significance and are generally of three types:

Statutory Violations

Statutory violations are generally offenses related to licensing and registration. These types of violations reflect moral hazards. Typical statutory violations can include:

- Operating an unregistered vehicle
- Operating an uninsured vehicle
- Using false registration or license
- Driving while license is under suspension
- Driving While Intoxicated

Major Violations

Major violations are serious convictions that indicate a general disregard toward public safety. Typical major violations would include:

- Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Reckless driving
- Hit and run

Moving Violations

Moving violations reflect improper driving attitudes and poor driving habits. Typical moving violations would include:

- Speeding
- Failure to yield the right-of-way
- Driving too fast for conditions

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Interpreting MVR’s

Before evaluating an MVR, it is important to establish fair evaluation criteria that will be used consistently for all MVR’s. Existing drivers that do not meet acceptable standards should be “grand fathered” and required to come within the standard in a defined time period. Suggested sample criteria would be as follows:

- No statutory or major violations listed on the MVR
- No more than three moving violations and/or at-fault accidents within the last three years
- No active or moral suspensions (failure to have valid insurance, failure to pay ticket) during past three years.

It is important to review each MVR on its own merit because there will always be exceptions to the rule. An MVR should be interpreted in relation to the driver’s age, driving experience, attitude, and other factors. The following issues should be explored before disqualifying a current or potential driver:

- Has the number of violations increased or decreased with the age of the individual?
- Do the violations suggest an attitude or disregard for traffic regulations?
- Does the frequency or type of violations suggest or predict a particular type of accident?
- Has the driver completed a Defensive Driving Program within the past 3 years?
- Which factors suggest there will be a decrease or increase in violations or accidents in the future?

Current and prospective employees must be informed that their MVR will be reviewed and the evaluation criteria being used. After obtaining the MVR, check the violations listed against those listed on the application. Discuss any discrepancies with the applicant. Remember that an MVR is only one of many tools that should be used to evaluate an employee’s ability to perform the tasks required for the job. An MVR should never be used as the sole evaluation criteria.

To facilitate determining if an MVR is acceptable to Philadelphia Insurance, please utilize the “MVR Analysis” program attached with this document. This program evaluates MVR’s based on accidents, violation and suspensions, grants credit for completing Defensive Driving and determines if the individual is acceptable to be listed under the insurance program.

Record Keeping and Updates

MVR’s should be filed in the employee’s personnel or driver-qualification file. The frequency with which you should update a driver’s MVR depends on several factors, including your type of operations, driver supervision, and above all, the accident experience.

In general, MVR’s should be reviewed for all drivers on an annual basis to ensure that they are maintaining good driving habits and remain qualified to drive. Drivers with clean MVR’s can be reviewed less frequently, while drivers with violations or accidents should be reviewed more frequently.

MVR’s can be obtained through many sources. Contact your insurance agent or broker to find out the best way to obtain MVR’s in your area.

A policy of reviewing MVR’s for all drivers is an invaluable management tool. However, these checks do not reduce the importance of other aspects of a driver selection program such as interviews, reference checks and driver testing.