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Trucking Safety Seminar

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How Bad Drivers Get Hired

Brooks Rugemer, Lancaster, PA

The Safety Department of a Motor Carrier

&

Why Bad Drivers get Hired

Brooks Rugemer

Commercial Transportation Specialist

Robson Forensic

Engineers, Architects, Scientists & Fire Investigators

About Brooks

- 12 years and 1.4 million miles as a Tractor Trailer Driver
- 18 years in Transportation Management: Dispatcher, Driver Supervisor, Safety Instructor, Safety Manager, Terminal Manager, Regional Business Manager
- Former owner of a Driver Recruiting and Training company
- 5000 Driver hires: By my own hand and by the approval of the work of my staff
- 3000+/- hours of Industry provided DOT/FMCSR, OSHA, HR, and Risk Management training

Structure of the Safety Department

Corporate Level Staff

Executive Level Safety & Risk Management

- **Executive Level Decision Makers**
- **Corporate wide Compliance & Training**
- **DOT / FMCSA Compliance**
- **OSHA – warehouse operations, repair shops**
- **EPA – waste oil, emission programs, diesel storage, GWUDI**

Structure of the Safety Department

Corporate Level Staff

Director of Training

- In house Truck Driver Training Programs
- “Finishing Programs” for recent truck school grads
- Regularly scheduled training modules
- Defensive Driving programs
- Post accident remedial training
- Non-driver training: warehouse personnel, mechanics
- **Manager and Supervisor training**

Structure of the Safety Department

Corporate Level Staff

Director of Recruiting

- Determines minimum Company hiring standards:
 - ❑ Experience levels, acceptable safety history, etc.
- Establishes new-hire Orientation program
- Involved in developing competitive pay packages
- Oversees Terminal level recruiting staff
- Final approval on all hires

Structure of the Safety Department

Terminal Level Staff

Terminal Safety Manager

- Manages the Safety functions for 1 or more Company terminals
- Advances the Corporate Safety Policies & Mandates
- Handles Driver terminations and resignations
- Oversees **Terminal Safety Supervisors** who:
 - Administers regulatory compliance
 - Administer new-hire orientations
 - Initial accident, injury, cargo, and property claims investigations

Structure of the Safety Department

Terminal Level Staff

Terminal Safety Instructor

- Someone with practical driving experience
- Hands-on skills training
- New hire road tests
- Post-accident re-training

Terminal Safety Clerk

- Generates the Driver Qualification File (Q-file)
- Arranges transportation, lodging, meals, and performs other support activity

Structure of the Safety Department

Terminal Level Staff

Driver Recruiter

- Creates advertisements for Drivers in his region
- Conducts phone interviews and initial screenings
- Makes conditional offers of employment to drivers who pass initial screening

Involved with **Driver retention**

High pressure job

High turnover position

Responsible to fill the trucks

Collecting Info for your Case

Information from Terminal Staff is Critical

- Corporate Level Staff will give you the party line: ***“... we at Jackknife Trucking are committed to hiring only the safest and most professional truckers in the whole wide world..”***
- **At the Terminal Level you may find:**
“...I need 1 more hire to meet this week’s quota. Maybe Corporate won’t notice this guys 3 drunk driving arrests...”

The most useful info will be found at the **Terminals**

Safety vs. Profit

The Financial Reality of it all

- The typical OTR or Regional tractor generates \$800 - \$1000 daily
- The typical tractor has \$125 / day overhead costs:
 - ✓ Payment
 - ✓ Insurance, taxes
 - ✓ Maintenance escrow

Does not include fuel and Driver wages (400 mi day):

- \$260 / day for fuel
- \$200 / day for Driver wages

The Role of Driver Recruiting

(A Major Nationwide Motor Carrier)

10,500 tractors

10,000 CDL Drivers

500 empty tractors

=

\$40,000 - \$50,000 per day

15 Million / year

of lost earning opportunity

www.saferSYS.org

The Role of Driver Recruiting

The Process of Hiring CDL Drivers

- Each Terminal hires from a wide geographical area
Not uncommon to have 30 drivers in Orientation
- Logistical challenges:
 - Travel for drivers to the Terminal for Orientation
 - Lodging when they arrive
 - Shuttle back and forth from the hotel to the Terminal
 - Meals during orientation
 - Shuttle to the clinic for DOT physicals

The Role of Driver Recruiting

Orientation Class

- Industry Standard is 3 – 5 days
- Company Policies and Procedures
- Logbook Training
- General Safety Training
- Road tests
- Physicals & drug / alcohol tests
- Equipment Training

The Cost of Driver Recruiting

Orientation Costs

\$ 250 – Travel to Orientation (bus, train, mileage)

\$ 850 – Lodging – meals for 3-5 days

\$ 200 – Physical and drug / alcohol screen

\$ 750 – Administration costs for FMCSR processing

\$2050 total processing cost per Driver

X 30 drivers per class

**\$61,500 = \$3,075.000 per year for
Recruiting at one Terminal**

Safety vs. Profit

Every driver dismissed from Orientation is \$2050 spent,
and a tractor that wasn't filled

Recruiters are typically paid salary + commission:
Commission is based on head count.

Terminal Managers are typically salary + profit
sharing: High recruiting costs + low hiring numbers +
low tractor utilization (empty trucks) affect the bottom
line and affect pay.

**Both of their jobs are in danger if trucks sit empty
in the yard**

The Role of Driver Recruiting

Driver Qualification

Putting a Driver on the payroll is a 2-part process:

- The driver is hired as any employee is hired
- A CDL Driver must then be Qualified per the FMCSR

Qualification is being performed by the **Safety Clerks** while Orientation is taking place

Negative information in a Driver's work history is discovered during this process

From Day 1 the Class begins to shrink...

The Role of Driver Recruiting

Orientation Attrition

- As disqualifying information is discovered, that driver is pulled from Orientation and sent home - **sometimes**
- Some drivers fail the physical and are sent home - **sometimes**
- Some fail the drug / alcohol screen (?!?)
- Some fail the road test and are sent home - **sometimes**
- Some change their minds and decide they don't want the job – they have to find their own way home

Safety vs. Profit

What happens

- Drivers who fall just below Company minimums may have their information altered (**experience levels, etc**)
- Drivers who fail a road test may be given another chance. Maybe a special road test with the Recruiter
- Drivers who fail the medical exam may be sent to a different clinic

These actions are taken at the Terminal level, usually between the Recruiter, Safety Manager and Terminal Manager, and with the passive cooperation of the Safety Clerks

Safety vs. Profit

How to Catch these Actions

- Subpoena the Driver's Q-file from his last employer(s) for comparison to the Q-file prepared by the current employer at the time of the subject crash
- Safety Clerks see the collected info. They prepare the Q-file and submit to the Safety Manager for review
- After the file is reviewed, it is returned to the Safety Clerks for proper filing and storage
- Safety Clerks know what info is disqualifying and what drivers received disqualifying info.

Summary

All of your cases should start with a thorough review of the Driver's Q-file

Followed By:

- **Terminal Operations** – Unreasonable transit times, untrained **Driver Managers** (Dispatchers) pushing too hard, load preplanning without control: all have an impact on the safety of the Driver
- **Logbook falsifications** – The logbook itself is often the least important document for this investigation.

The information we discover will tell me what to do next

Questions?

Answers?

*Thank You very much for
your Time*

Brooks Rugemer

Robson Forensic

Engineers, Architects, Scientists & Fire Investigators