

Driver & Fleet Workbook

Step 1: Written Policies and Procedures

Actions

Take inventory of current written policies/procedures – Do you have the following written policies/procedures? Written policies set up the expectations for all employees to follow and provide a guideline for training and compliance. A tree service should have all of these in place.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fleet Safety Program
<input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle Maintenance Program
<input type="checkbox"/> Pre/Post Trip Inspection Form
<input type="checkbox"/> Accident Reporting Procedure
<input type="checkbox"/> Distracted Driving Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle Usage Procedure
<input type="checkbox"/> Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) Guideline
<input type="checkbox"/> Driver Training Program
<input type="checkbox"/> Driving Test |
|---|--|

***Note** These do not need to be separate documents. They could be included within your overall safety program or employee handbook. Just make sure they are in writing.*

Assign Management Duties - To have an effective Driver and Fleet Safety Program, you must have proper management of a number of variables. Designating who within your company is in charge of each area is critical. Who is responsible for each area below:

	<u>Team Member</u>	<u>Records Kept? Where?</u>	<u>How Long?</u>
<i>Employee Information:</i>			
MVR's _____	_____	_____	_____
Training _____	_____	_____	_____
Conduct/Discipline _____	_____	_____	_____
<i>Vehicle Information:</i>			
Inventory _____	_____	_____	_____
Maintenance Logs _____	_____	_____	_____
DOT Compliance _____	_____	_____	_____
<i>Safety Information:</i>			
Driving Test _____	_____	_____	_____
Accident Reports _____	_____	_____	_____
Insurance Claim Contact _____	_____	_____	_____

Step 2: Hire the Best Drivers

****Employees represent the largest exposure to every tree care company. From creating liability by damaging property or injuring others, to injuring themselves, to filing lawsuits against the company or other employees; hiring the best employees should be of utmost concern for the business owner.****

Actions

Review Hiring Process – What does your hiring process consist of? Do you have written job descriptions for each position? A formal interview process? An understanding of which forms to have a prospective employee complete? If you have not worked on your hiring process, connect with an ArboRisk team member to walk through the Hiring & Recruiting Workbook.

Our Hiring Process: _____

Do you have the following in place for hiring:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| ____ Written Job Descriptions | ____ Defined Career Path |
| ____ Interview Process/Strategy | ____ Standard Employment Forms |
| ____ Background Check/Testing Strategy | ____ MVR Guidelines |

Upgrades to Hiring Process - What do you and your team need to do to improve your hiring process? Who will be responsible for what and by when?

Blog Posts for Reference

Hiring Best Practices (September 5, 2018)

Are You in Danger of Losing Your Best Employee (March 26th, 2019)

Step 3: Manage Drivers

Create/Review MVR Process - While not a perfect science, analyzing an employee's driving record is a great way to predict their future behavior. If you are not running Motor Vehicle Reports (MVR's) aka driving records on each of your employees and prospective employees, follow this step by step process.

State Law - Your MVR process will start with the laws in your state. Answer these questions:

Can you order MVR's for employees or prospective employees? Y or N

If yes, do you need written authorization? Y or N

If no, how can you access this information? _____

MVR Guidelines - Create a set of acceptable guidelines for driving record violations. Grab a copy of ArboRisk's MVR Guidelines to start with and then verify with your insurance company. Also determine how often you will analyze the MVR's. Your insurance company will typically run your MVR's about 60 days prior to your insurance renewal, but will not share any information unless there is a driver they want to restrict driving duties for. We recommend you running your own MVR's at least once per year and preferably 90 days prior to your insurance renewal so you can proactively discuss troublesome drivers with the insurance company before they issue a restrictive driving order on an important team member. Use this list to build your MVR Guideline policy:

Written easy to understand guidelines? Y or N

Major & minor violations defined? Y or N

Verified with your auto insurance company? Y or N

Who will run MVR's? _____

How often will you analyze MVR's? _____

Is there a specific time of the year to review MVR's? _____

Disciplinary Actions for Driving Record Violations - How the company will handle driving record violations should also be included in your written policy. Ask yourself these questions:

Which violations or incidents must be reported directly to management? How soon after?

What disciplinary actions should be imposed upon drivers? _____

How will you track violations and disciplinary actions? _____

Develop Driver Test - Prior to allowing an employee to drive a company vehicle, we strongly recommend having that employee complete a driver test. There is no perfect driver test out there, but here are the steps to building an effective driving test.

1. *Determine the vehicle(s) used for the test* - Most tree care companies have an assortment of different vehicles. We recommend that each driver passes a driving test for each type of vehicle that they can drive.

These vehicles will be used for your test(s): _____

2. *Designate a current team member(s) to facilitate the test* - This team member must have obviously shown proficiency in operating the type of vehicle that will be used during the test and have an understanding of what to look for to approve a new driver.

Your driving test facilitator(s) will be: _____

3. *Decide on what components you want to incorporate into your test* - Driving tests should include a number of skills to properly verify the knowledge and skill level of the driver. At minimum a test should include: pre-trip inspection, starting, stopping, turning both directions, backing up and parking, etc. however, you may also want to include trailer attachment and/or permanently attached equipment operation (aerial lift, dump body, etc.).

The components of your test are: _____

4. *Determine a safe route for the driving test.* - You most likely will not have enough room in your yard to do a full driving test, so search out an area or route close to your shop to perform the test. Consider the components that you will be testing for when selecting your route.

Your route will be: _____

5. *Create a checklist or sign off sheet for the facilitator to complete during the test* - Obviously you will need to have some written proof of what was discovered during the driving test. Create a simple checklist for the facilitator to use and reference afterwards in making recommendations for additional training for the employee.

Develop Driver Training Program - The last step in managing your drivers is to provide a training program to ensure your drivers are the best that they can be. A driver training program should encompass both internal and external training sources.

Internal Training - Most tree care companies deliver driver training to their employees during their tailgate safety meetings. While this is a great time to do so, the tailgate meetings may not always be planned out too far in advance and could miss some crucial driver training topics. Use these questions to create an internal driver training program.

What driver training topics do you already cover within your tailgate safety meetings? _____

What are some of the most common near misses that your company has when it comes to operating vehicles? _____

Who in your company would be proficient in teaching the driver training? _____

Perhaps a timed competition with vehicles on a closed course? _____

External Training - Attending training programs put on by outside vendors offer many benefits to your company. Because there are many different options, use this list of questions to help select the proper training vendors.

What type of driver training topics are your current team members not capable of delivering but will be important to your company (think defensive driving, roadside emergency preparedness, etc.). _____

Are there local driving schools in your area? Can you take your vehicles to use during the class?

Blog Posts for Reference

Driver Risk Management (July 27th, 2020)

Driver Training (September 22nd, 2020)

Step 4: Fleet Management

Actions

Build a Formal Fleet Management Program - There are so many benefits to your company for having a formal fleet management program. For starters, your vehicles most likely represent the largest category of business assets as well as the largest liability exposure to your business. Ensuring that you are doing all that you can to protect the vehicles and your business is imperative. At a minimum, your fleet management program should include three sections: Vehicles, Compliance and Accident Reporting.

Vehicles - This section of your fleet management program covers the maintenance, usage, storage and telematics of your vehicles. Use the following questions to unveil the concerns with your vehicles.

1. *Maintenance* - Maintained vehicles perform as expected without unscheduled repairs and downtime. Preventative maintenance is as simple as following the manufacturers recommendations for oil changes, tire rotations, inspection and general vehicle safety checks. Remember preventative means proactive.

Do you have a maintenance schedule for each vehicle? _____

Do you track regular maintenance? If so, are you using a software program? _____

Do you have a follow-up procedure to notify you of upcoming maintenance? _____

Do you have a regularly scheduled maintenance day within your company? _____

What areas of preventative maintenance does your company need to improve upon? _____

2. *Usage* - How your vehicles are used within your company has a large influence on the liability of your business.

Have you defined how your vehicles can be used by your employees? Y or N

Do you allow vehicles to be taken home and driven personally by your employees? If yes, do you have a written policy outlining the expected use of the vehicle including who else is authorized to drive the vehicle, how often or far the vehicle can be driven and what type of driving? _____

Have you explained the vehicle usage policy to your employees? Y or N

Do your employees sign a document to verify understanding of usage policy? Y or N

What adjustments do you need to make to your vehicle usage policy? _____

Are there certain types of vehicles that can(not) be driven by certain employees? _____

3. *Storage* - How and where your vehicles are stored has a direct impact on the potential risks of physical damage including theft.

Where are your vehicles stored and what could happen to them while not in use? _____

Are any vehicles kept indoors when not in use? If so, think about the total value inside the building in case of fire. _____

Are any vehicles kept close to the building, fuel tank, wood burner, kiln, etc. that could increase the chance of fire or collateral damage to vehicles? _____

Do you need to make some adjustments to which vehicles are kept indoors or near buildings/hazards? _____

Are any vehicles kept on open storage lots where you may have signed a lease with the property owner to keep the vehicles there? If so, did you review the insurance/liability requirements of that lease? _____

4. *Telematics/Fleet Management Software* - Having data regarding your vehicle's and driver's performance can help your management team make specific decisions on your fleet management. If you are considering installing a telematics system, ask yourself these questions:

What kind of metrics would you like to know about your vehicles or drivers? (think location, driving performance, vehicle performance, fluid levels, maintenance records, etc.) _____

Do you foresee adding additional types of vehicles (crane truck, tractor & trailer, etc.)?

Does your insurance company offer this service or give a discount for it? _____

Compliance - Tree services face many compliance issues when it comes to their vehicles and drivers. While this document is not intended to be all encompassing, these questions will help you understand where your compliance gaps may be so you can work on preventing a fine or shutdown.

1. *Vehicles* - Because of the size and use of the vehicles in your fleet, they are subject to compliance issues to keep your employees and the general public safe.

Does your state have its own Department of Transportation (DOT) laws that you need to comply with? How do these laws interact with the federal DOT? _____

Do you operate in more than one state? Y or N
If yes, do you know the differences between the state requirements? _____

Do you have a pre-post trip inspection form that is used daily? Y or N
If yes, how long are you keeping them on file? _____

Do you have maintenance records for each vehicle on file? Y or N
If yes, how long are you keeping them on file? _____

Do you have an accident log on file? Y or N

2. *Drivers* - The people that operate your vehicles clearly add to your potential compliance issues.

Do any drivers have their Commercial Drivers Licence? Y or N
If yes, what are your requirements for drug testing? _____

Are your drivers properly licensed for the vehicles they are driving? Y or N
If yes, can you prove it? _____

Do your drivers maintain required daily driving logs? Y or N
If yes, how long are you keeping them on file? _____

Accident Reporting Procedure - Obtaining the proper information at the time of an accident can help the resolution immensely. Your fleet management program should include a section for how to properly report an accident within your company.

Do you have an accident form that a driver can pull out and obtain all of the proper information right at the accident scene? Y or N
If yes, is there at least one copy of this form in every vehicle? Y or N

When an accident occurs, who do you want your driver to contact? (think HR, crew leaders, police, etc.) _____

Do you have an accident investigation procedure in place? Y or N
If yes, who is responsible for performing it and when? _____

***NOTE**As you can probably imagine if you answered "N" to any of these questions within the Compliance section, work with your ArboRisk team member to get them in place.*

Blog Posts for Reference

6 Tips to Getting the Most out of Your Fleet (August 11th, 2020)

Importance of Vehicle Inspections (July 13th, 2020)

Is My Business Compliant with DOT (October 10th, 2018)