

POST-INCIDENT COACHING KIT

A Manager's Guide to Collaborative Coaching and
Root-Cause Analysis Following a Vehicle Collision



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Network of Employers
for Traffic Safety

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The Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS) is a collaborative group of employer road safety professionals whose objective is to advance road safety for employees, their family members and members of the communities where they live and work. Members help one another improve road safety and reduce losses through fleet safety benchmarking and sharing proven, best practice approaches. NETS membership includes global traffic safety leaders across private industry and government, whose fleets range from fewer than 100 vehicles to those with more than 50,000.

This toolkit is designed to help you reduce risk and save lives by providing focused coaching to employees after they have had a collision. If you would like to customize this document with your company's logo and branding elements, please **contact NETS** for the files.

Acknowledgments

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Disclaimer

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The Manager's Role in the Post-Incident Coaching Process

In most organizations, field managers are expected to conduct and document a post-incident coaching (PIC) session with any driver who is involved in an “at fault” collision in a company vehicle or personally owned vehicle used to conduct company business. The purpose of the PIC is to determine and document what happened and why it happened. A manager that is skillful in behavioral coaching will be able to determine not only what happened, but why it happened – including the driver behavior leading up to the incident.

Behavioral coaching goes further: A manager using a behavioral coaching approach explores not only the facts, but also the decisions, habits and situational pressures that influenced the driver's behavior. The goal is not just to record events, but to help the driver gain insight into why the behavior occurred and how to make safer choices in the future.

WHAT IS A POST-INCIDENT COACHING SESSION?

A post-incident coaching (PIC) session is an effective way for a field manager to follow up with an employee who has been involved in a collision to help the driver avoid future incidents.

Unlike a traditional investigation, a PIC session uses a coaching mindset: the manager partners with the driver to reflect on what happened, uncover the behavioral and environmental factors that contributed to the collision, and agree on practical steps for improvement.

During an effective coaching session, a manager using a behavioral approach should:

- Review the facts of the collision.
- Explore the behaviors and situational pressures that may have contributed (root cause.)
- Use open-ended questions to understand why the unsafe choice was made.
- Discuss what can be done to prevent future incidents (with driver ownership of the solution.)

POST-INCIDENT COACHING – PROCESS FLOW AND EXPECTATIONS

Complete immediately after a collision occurs

- The driver shall notify his or her manager and the fleet leasing or insurance company (or any other party identified by policy) of the collision.
- Manager response: confirm everyone's safety and any medical needs, set a supportive tone, and avoid blame focused language.
- Arrange next steps: preserve objective facts (time, location, conditions, photos if policy allows) and avoid speculation in emails/texts.

Complete within one week after the incident occurs:

Upon receiving notice of the collision, the manager and driver shall then schedule a post-incident coaching discussion (as soon as possible, but not more than one week after the incident) to address the following:

- Review the facts of the collision.
- Identify the type of collision that occurred and what could have been done to avoid the collision, including the root cause of the collision.
- Document corrective actions.
- Agree to actions (manager and driver) that will positively change driver behavior.

ORGANIZING FACTS ABOUT THE INCIDENT

A key part of the PIC process involves a discussion between the manager and driver to identify what factors contributed to the collision. It is important to identify the true root cause of the collision. For instance – “speeding” isn’t a root cause. To get to the root cause, you will need to determine WHY the driver was speeding.

- Driving conditions and environment
- Driver behavior
- Pre-collision context (i.e., what was happening prior to the collision that led to the driver’s behavior)

What factors contributed to the collision?

- Driving conditions can include poor road conditions, lighting, traffic, weather, etc.
- Driving behavior includes the behavior and attitude of the driver as well as other drivers – illegal turns, following too closely, speeding, being unaware of surroundings, use of cell phone or other electronic devices, etc. This is a great opportunity to ask why the driver engaged in that behavior. (e.g. time pressure, distraction, habit, misjudged risk.)
- Pre-collision context includes what was occurring in the moments leading up to the collision such as fatigue from extended driving, rushing to meet a deadline, emotional distress, conversation with a passenger, or multitasking on the job, that may have influenced the driver’s choices.

Use this simple organizing framework:

- Step 1, What happened:
 - When, where, and what were the driving conditions?
 - What was the driver doing right before the collision- the pre-collision context?
Consider the driver's state and environment: for example, rushing to meet a schedule, feeling fatigued, distracted by a device, or reacting to another driver's actions.
 - What could have helped avoid the collision? Review factors such as speed, following distance, scanning, distraction, compliance with signs and traffic signals.
- Step 2, Identify the root cause:
 - Driver behavior: What was the driver doing, and why did it happen?
 - System and environmental factors: Time pressure, customer expectations, routing, fatigue, stress, etc.
 - What could change at the organizational level to prevent recurrence?
- Step 3, Commitment to change: Driver and Management/Leadership commitments to specific actions or follow-up.

DISCUSSING DEFENSIVE DRIVING WITH THE DRIVER

This toolkit includes guidelines describing defensive driving skills that can help drivers avoid specific types of collisions.

Find the type of collision module that most closely matches your driver's situation:

Prepare to discuss the applicable defensive driving guidelines with your driver during the coaching session. During the coaching session, get your driver to participate in the discussion of defensive driving while also focusing on the root cause of the collision.

A couple of key questions to ask might include:

- If you found yourself in a similar situation in the future, what would you do differently to avoid the incident?
- What were you thinking or doing immediately prior to the collision?
- Is there anything that our organization can do to avoid these situations in the future?

Turn answers into commitments (examples):

"If I'm running behind, then I will call ahead and stick to the posted speed limit."

"If visibility drops, then I will increase following distance to 3-4 seconds."

"If I hear a text notification, then I will ignore it until parked."

COLLISION MODULE DESCRIPTIONS

Company Driver Rear-Ends Another Vehicle MODULE 1

Collision where Company Driver hits the rear of Other Driver while one or both are moving. NOTE: Does not include Parking or Backing incidents.

Company Driver Failed to Yield/Intersection Collision MODULE 2

Collision where Company Driver failed to allow Other Driver to proceed ahead or merge into traffic which resulted in a collision. Example: Failure to yield to traffic entering an intersection or major roadway.

Company Driver Parking/Backing/Stationary Object Collision MODULE 3

Collision where Company Driver backs into another vehicle, strikes Other Driver while both are pulling into or out of a parking location, or Other Driver is in their vehicle and the vehicle is not moving. NOTE: This does not include situations where vehicle was unattended and hit while parked.

Collision where the Company Driver hits an object that is stationary or fixed. Example: hitting a stationary post, guardrail, tree, etc. NOTE: Does NOT include hitting another vehicle.

Company Driver Lost Control/Single Vehicle Collision MODULE 4

Collision occurs as a result of Company Driver losing control of the vehicle based on weather conditions, road conditions and over-reaction.

Company Driver Collision with Vulnerable Road User MODULE 5

Company driver was involved in a collision with a vulnerable road user (pedestrian, bicyclist, motorcyclist, etc.). NOTE: This can include road users who are walking, running, operating non-motorized and motorized scooters, bicycles, or performing other recreational activities.

Company Vehicle Rear-Ended by Another Vehicle MODULE 6

Collision where Other Driver hits rear of Company Vehicle while one or both vehicles are moving.

Module 1:

DRIVER HITS REAR OF OTHER DRIVER

Even if another vehicle stops suddenly, a defensive driver can avoid a rear-end collision.

To avoid this type of incident, advise your driver to:

- Follow the four-second following distance rule: As the vehicle ahead of you passes a landmark, start counting, “One-thousand one, one-thousand two,” etc. If your own vehicle passes the same landmark before you count off four full seconds, increase your following distance. Increase it even more in bad weather, on poor roads, and at night.
- Maintain a cushion of safety when stopped behind another vehicle: You should be able to see clearly where its rear tires touch the pavement. This allows you enough room to maneuver around the other vehicle in an emergency.
- Scan ahead to anticipate merging traffic, road conditions or obstructions that could cause vehicles ahead of you to stop suddenly.
- When driving, focus only on driving: Silence/secure phone before driving, return calls after stopping, and understand that “handsfree” is still a distraction
- Keep to the posted speed limit
- Pre-Plan your trip: When looking for an unfamiliar address, avoid sudden stops or turns. If necessary, go past your destination, turn around, and go back.
- Understand scheduling or workload requirements to reduce or eliminate time pressure and the need to speed

To avoid making a front-end collision even more hazardous, your driver should also:

- Store heavy objects that could become projectiles in the trunk, or secure them in place with a seat belt.

Example Scenario

Step 1: What happened?

Work collaboratively with your driver to gather the facts—what happened? This should be a conversation, not a blame-seeking investigation.

Incident <i>Describe objectively what happened</i>	When, where, conditions <i>What time? What weather? Where? Any other factors?</i>
Company driver suddenly collided with the rear of a partially pulled-over vehicle.	5pm, clear weather - Light traffic, coming over a hill - Other vehicle had hazard lights on but was not fully off the highway
Pre-collision context: What was the driver doing right before? <i>Describe what happened before the collision (e.g., speeding, distracted driving, tailgating)</i>	What could have helped avoid the collision? <i>What could the driver have done differently to avoid the collision?</i>
- Driving 65 in a 55 - On a handsfree call from work - Reaching for a phone that slid from the console	- Slower speed, attention fully on the road - Not taking the call/reaching for phone while driving

Step 2: Identify the root cause

Work collaboratively with your driver to ask decisive questions that diagnose the context that led to the collision.

First:

What was the driver doing?	Driver Behavior/ Why did that happen? (Root Cause)
• Driver made a choice to take a call from work • Driver had reached for phone that slid off the console • Driver was speeding	• Took a call because it came from a supervisor, assumed handsfree made it “safe” • Reached for the phone out of habit, felt pressure not to miss a work call • Driving over the speed limit was “normal” for the route to stay on schedule • Company policy did not restrict use of phone while driving

Second:

System/Environment Factors	What Could Change at the Organizational Level?
• No clear company expectation around declining calls while driving • Productivity pressure may encourage drivers to answer immediately • Vehicles not equipped with phone cradles or storage solutions • Training may focus on rules but less on the cognitive limits of divided attention	• Establish a clear policy: no calls while driving, even handsfree • Equip vehicles with phone cradles or storage solutions to reduce distraction • Review scheduling expectations that may lead to speeding • Reinforce culture that prioritizes safe arrival over immediate responsiveness • Implement Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA) to prevent speeding and/or telematics to monitor speeding; ensure consistent reinforcement for following speed limit paired with consistent consequences for speeding • Offer recognition program or positive reinforcement for obeying speed limits and proper phone use

Step 3: What will we commit to change?

Work collaboratively with the driver to identify the things in your control to change and commit to those changes. Encourage the driver to turn answers into specific “I will ...” or “If ... then ...” commitments.

Driver Commitment	Manager/Company Commitment
• Silence/secure phone before driving, return calls after stopping • Keep to the posted speed limit • Acknowledge that “handsfree” is still a distraction	• Ensure clear expectations around speeding and phone use are included in policies; communicate procedure regarding letting calls go to voicemail while driving and returning calls once stopped • Provide training that highlights <i>cognitive distraction</i> • Share telematics feedback not as punishment, but to coach safer habits • Offer recognition and positive reinforcement for obeying speed limits and proper phone use • Explore scheduling or workload adjustments to reduce time pressure

Module 2:

DRIVER FAILED TO YIELD/INTERSECTION COLLISION

Most collisions that occur at intersections are preventable. A safe and responsible driver approaches and passes through intersections cautiously, knows how to safely handle complex traffic movement, blind intersections, and the failure of other drivers to abide by traffic regulations.

To avoid this type of collision, advise your driver to:

- Scan ahead to anticipate problems.
- Slow down and cover the brake when entering or passing through an intersection.
- Come to a complete stop at intersection stop signs.
- Obey all traffic signals, stoplights and stop signs.
- When first in line at a red light, wait two seconds after the light turns green before entering the intersection.
- Check for cross traffic before entering or passing through an intersection. You need to check for cross traffic by turning your head to look in both directions. Traffic coming from the left is closer to you and will cross your path first. So look first to the left, then to the right, and finally back to the left again. (Please note: In countries that drive on the other side of the road, drivers should look right-left-right.)
- Recognize intersection blind spots:
 - Prepare for drivers entering traffic from blind spots.
 - Exercise extra caution when entering traffic from a blind spot.
 - Be aware of environmental factors that can limit visibility such as fog, rain, sun glare and heat coming off the road
- Signal turns well in advance.
- Use extra caution when turning across opposing traffic.
- When driving, focus only on driving.
- Plan for your trip: enter GPS directions ahead of time and enable audible directions, or pull over to a safe place to check and/or enter directions if not done beforehand.

Additional Information

Cross-Traffic Turns

- Get into the turn lane well in advance.
- Turn on your signal at least 100 feet in advance of the turn.
- Stop and yield to cross traffic and opposing traffic.
- Keep your wheels straight until you actually make the turn.
- Execute the turn so that you enter the cross street on the correct side of the center line, in the lane closest to the center line.

Example Scenario

Step 1: What happened?

Work collaboratively with your driver to gather the facts—what happened? This should be a conversation, not a blame-seeking investigation.

Incident <i>Describe objectively what happened</i>	When, where, conditions <i>What time? What weather? Where? Any other factors?</i>
Company driver slammed into the side of another vehicle at a 4-way intersection.	- Rural road - Sunny and hot day, temperatures were over 90°F (32°C) and some parts of the road looked like they were melting.
Pre-collision context: What was the driver doing right before? <i>Describe what happened before the collision (e.g., speeding, distracted driving, tailgating)</i>	What could have helped avoid the collision? <i>What could the driver have done differently to avoid the collision?</i>
- Holding the phone - Looking down at a map to check directions - Did not come to a complete stop at the intersection - Did not check all directions before proceeding to make a left turn	- Pre-programming a map with audible directions - Mounting the electronic device on the dashboard - Coming to a complete stop at the intersection - Checking all directions for other vehicles (straight, left, right, left again or in some countries straight, right, left, right again).

Step 2: Identify the root cause

Work collaboratively with your driver to ask decisive questions that diagnose the context that led to the collision.

First:

What was the driver doing?	Driver Behavior/ Why did that happen? (Root Cause)
• Driver made a choice to hold his phone and check the map to see where he was going • Driver did not come to a complete stop • Driver did not check all directions before proceeding into the intersection and did not to see the other vehicle	• Driver did not prepare correctly for the trip by pre-programming the map with audible directions and mounting his phone on the dash • Company policy did not require pre-programming audible directions or mounting an electronic device • Coaching and training sessions had not been conducted recently to review proper intersection procedures

Second:

System/Environment Factors	What Could Change at the Organizational Level?
• No clear company expectation to pre-program maps with audible directions • Vehicles may lack safe phone mounts, increasing temptation to hold/check devices while moving • Training and coaching hadn't addressed the need for increased awareness at intersections when visibility is limited due to environmental factors (hot, sunny day caused the road to look like it was melting)	• Establish a policy to have employees pre-plan their GPS entries with audible directions and build in trip planning time at dispatch or before departure • Reinforce that pulling over to a safe area to recheck or input directions is acceptable • Implement consistent training and coaching for all drivers on proceeding through intersections • Provide approved dash mounts for phones/navigation devices

Step 3: What will we commit to change?

Work collaboratively with the driver to identify the things in your control to change and commit to those changes. Encourage the driver to turn answers into specific “I will ...” or “If ... then ...” commitments.

Driver Commitment	Manager/Company Commitment
• Program and secure navigation with audible directions before trip begins. • Pull over safely if lost or uncertain about route. • Come to a complete stop at an intersection and check all directions before proceeding	• Incorporate pre-trip route review and setup into standard procedures • Provide secure phone mounts for all vehicles. • Provide training and/or coaching on defensive driver techniques with specifics on maneuvering through intersections and checking all directions • Reinforce cultural expectation to focus only on driving and not drive distracted

MODULE 3

PARKING/BACKING/STATIONARY OBJECT COLLISION

To avoid this type of collision, advise your driver to:

- Slow down significantly while traveling through parking lots and garages.
- When parallel parking, ensure there is enough space to park safely.
- Stay alert to the presence and movement of other vehicles and pedestrians.
- Avoid backing out of parking spots whenever possible. Look for opportunities to use “pull-through” parking or back into a parking spot. If backing out is unavoidable, check clearances and traffic all around the car until the maneuver is completed.
 - Walk around the vehicle before getting in and check for clearance and objects.
 - Use your mirrors when pulling out but also remember to check blind spots.
 - Check backup camera for obstructions and listen for alerts.
 - Avoid tight parking spaces.
- Park only in well-lit areas.
- Prepare for the drive ahead of time by adjusting radio/music, silencing phone, inputting GPS directions, etc. and focus only on driving.
- If installed in the vehicle, pay attention to audible or visual alerts for blind spots, other objects, and obstructions around the vehicle.

Example Scenario

Step 1: What happened?

Work collaboratively with your driver to gather the facts—what happened? This should be a conversation, not a blame-seeking investigation.

Incident <i>Describe objectively what happened</i>	When, where, conditions <i>What time? What weather? Where? Any other factors?</i>
Driver hit a parked vehicle while backing out of the delivery area of an office building.	- Midday around 12pm - Delivery area behind an office building - Rainy day with some fog
Pre-collision context: What was the driver doing right before? <i>Describe what happened before the collision (e.g., speeding, distracted driving, tailgating)</i>	What could have helped avoid the collision? <i>What could the driver have done differently to avoid the collision?</i>
- Changing music to radio at a loud volume - Buckling his seatbelt while backing up	- Backing into the delivery area - Finding a pull-through area to park - Adjusting the radio and buckling his seatbelt before putting the vehicle in gear

Step 2: Identify the root cause

Work collaboratively with your driver to ask decisive questions that diagnose the context that led to the collision.

First:

What was the driver doing?	Driver Behavior/ Why did that happen? (Root Cause)
• Driver made a choice to adjust the music and buckle while moving • Driver pulled forward into the delivery area instead of backing in	• Driver did not prepare for driving by buckling and adjusting the radio before moving • Driver felt rushed to finish the delivery and get to the next one and tried to save time by pulling forward into the delivery area instead of backing in or looking for a pull-through parking spot • Driver did not thoroughly check surroundings and clearances around his vehicle especially taking into consideration the weather and reduced visibility

Second:

System/Environment Factors	What Could Change at the Organizational Level?
• No clear company policy on backing into parking spot/finding a pull-through spot • Vehicle not equipped with backup camera with alert sensor • Productivity pressures caused the driver to feel the need to start driving without preparing for the drive ahead of time • Weather caused decreased visibility necessitating further vehicle walk around check	• Ensuring all vehicles have backup cameras with alert sensors and providing proper training on their use • Including requirement to back into spaces or find a pull-through parking spot • Providing a “walk around” checklist for all drivers to ensure they check for obstructions and clearances • Review scheduling expectations and reinforce company culture that prioritizes safety over productivity requirements

Step 3: What will we commit to change?

Work collaboratively with the driver to identify the things in your control to change and commit to those changes. Encourage the driver to turn answers into specific “I will ...” or “If ... then ...” commitments.

Driver Commitment	Manager/Company Commitment
• Prepare for driving ahead of time to eliminate distractions • Follow company-provided vehicle walk-around checklist before starting every drive • Commit to back-in or pull-through parking whenever possible	• Update policies to address parking requirements and communicate requirements to all drivers • Add backup cameras with alert capabilities to all vehicles • Create walk-around vehicle checklist to include weather considerations

MODULE 4

DRIVER LOST CONTROL OF VEHICLE/SINGLE VEHICLE COLLISIONS

(Weather and Non-Weather-Related Collisions)

Bad weather is not an excuse for having a collision. Rain, snow, etc. increase the hazards of driving, but a defensive driver knows how to adjust to these hazards.

To avoid this type of collision, advise your driver to:

- Reduce speed and increase following distance to at least six seconds during inclement weather.
- Turn on headlights to increase visibility to other drivers and pedestrians. Use low beams in fog.
- Control the vehicle by using 9 o'clock/3 o'clock hand positions on the steering wheel.
- Scan ahead continuously for slippery surfaces.
- Maintain the car and equipment such as tires, brakes, wiper blades and wiper fluid, in safe operating order, appropriate to weather conditions.
- Keep windshield, windows, headlights and taillights clean. This includes clearing snow from these surfaces as well as the roof of the vehicle.
- Control skids by looking and steering in the direction you want to go.
- Use proper cornering techniques:
 - Brake before the corner.
 - Release the brake and coast through the corner.
 - Accelerate only when your wheels are straight again.
- When driving, focus only on driving.
- If weather is causing unsafe driving conditions, pull over in a safe area until conditions have improved.

Single-vehicle collisions such as running off the road or collisions with stationary objects may be the result of evasive maneuvers, but they often result from factors within the driver's control.

This type of collision needs to be reviewed carefully to examine all the facts; however, common contributing factors within the driver's control include:

- Speed
- Fatigue/falling asleep at the wheel
- Failure to adjust to weather or road conditions
- Inadequate scanning or observation
- Use of alcohol or drugs
- Driver distraction

Example Scenario

Step 1: What happened?

Work collaboratively with your driver to gather the facts—what happened? This should be a conversation, not a blame-seeking investigation.

Incident <i>Describe objectively what happened</i>	When, where, conditions <i>What time? What weather? Where? Any other factors?</i>
Driver was heading back to the shop and rolled her vehicle over into the median	- Late afternoon - Heavy rain and wind, low visibility
Pre-collision context: What was the driver doing right before? <i>Describe what happened before the collision (e.g., speeding, distracted driving, tailgating)</i>	What could have helped avoid the collision? <i>What could the driver have done differently to avoid the collision?</i>
- Driver was looking at weather app on her phone to determine how much longer she had to drive in the storm. - Driver was following the speed limit of 65.	- Completely focusing on the road - Slowing down for given conditions - Checking weather prior to beginning drive

Step 2: Identify the root cause

Work collaboratively with your driver to ask decisive questions that diagnose the context that led to the collision.

First:

What was the driver doing?	Driver Behavior/ Why did that happen? (Root Cause)
- Driver made a choice to look for weather update and check her phone after starting drive - Driver did not go slower given weather conditions	Driver was nervous about the weather, but supervisor previously wrote her up for being late so did not pull over to check her phone and weather app

Second:

System/Environment Factors	What Could Change at the Organizational Level?
• Technology not installed in vehicle to provide weather alerts and automatic updates • Refresher driver training had not addressed increased awareness and focus during inclement weather • No company guidance or policy advised slowing down even less than the speed limit in wet, windy conditions	• Installing distracted driving detection with interior facing cameras in vehicles • Requiring cell phone blocking technology to prevent use • Updating training and guidelines or policies to include information on inclement weather driving techniques • Providing a company safety culture that prioritizes safe driving and allows for extra time whenever needed such as when weather is bad and slower speeds are required

Step 3: What will we commit to change?

Work collaboratively with the driver to identify the things in your control to change and commit to those changes. Encourage the driver to turn answers into specific “I will ...” or “If ... then ...” commitments.

Driver Commitment	Manager/Company Commitment
• Prepare for driving ahead of time to eliminate distractions • Stay even more vigilant in adverse weather conditions, or pulling over until conditions are safe for driving again	• Installing technology to provide weather alerts and updates • Adding distracted driving detection cameras into cabs of vehicles • Adding cell blocking technology to employee cell phones • Providing more consistent training and reminders on driving in inclement weather • Coaching employees to slow down and allow extra time whenever needed

MODULE 5

COLLISIONS INVOLVING VULNERABLE ROAD USERS

Vulnerable road users (VRUs) can include pedestrians who are walking or running, bicyclists, motorcyclists, those operating both motorized and non-motorized scooters, or those performing other recreational activities.

Right of way for pedestrians and other VRUs vary by country. In some countries like the United States, Canada, and European countries, pedestrians generally have the right of way at crosswalks and intersections, but rules differ by state/province/region. In some countries, laws exist but enforcement is weak. And in other countries, traffic dominates and pedestrians are more vulnerable.

Bicyclists have the same right of way as vehicles in many countries, but in others cycling infrastructure is limited and bicyclists are considered lower priority than vehicles. Laws for scooters, both motorized and non-motorized, are still developing in many places and are unclear. In some areas, scooters must use bike lanes while in others they must use the sidewalk.

Vehicle drivers are responsible for adjusting their driving wherever VRUs are likely to be present, and organizations should communicate the varying local laws and regulations regarding VRUs to their drivers.

To avoid this type of collision, advise your driver to:

- Drive with headlights on at all times in order to be more visible.
- Stay alert to the presence and movement of VRUs.
- Slow down and adhere to posted speed limits, especially when traveling through school zones, residential districts, shopping areas, parking lots, or other areas with heavy usage by VRUs.
- Scan ahead. Be prepared to stop suddenly or make an evasive maneuver if a VRU enters your path and look for “escape routes” where you can safely move away from a VRU.

Example Scenario

Step 1: What happened?

Work collaboratively with your driver to gather the facts—what happened? This should be a conversation, not a blame-seeking investigation.

Incident <i>Describe objectively what happened</i>	When, where, conditions <i>What time? What weather? Where? Any other factors?</i>
The car in front of driver suddenly swerved into the left lane. Driver did not see a bicyclist in his lane in time to stop; hit the cyclist, causing injury to the rider.	2:00 PM on Ford Rd in the Detroit suburbs - Right lane of a four-lane road - Heavy traffic - Weather was clear
Pre-collision context: What was the driver doing right before? <i>Describe what happened before the collision (e.g., speeding, distracted driving, tailgating)</i>	What could have helped avoid the collision? <i>What could the driver have done differently to avoid the collision?</i>
Driver was driving aggressively: tailgating, speeding and changing lanes often	- Scanning ahead to predict the slowdown of traffic - Reducing speed given the heavy traffic - Creating extra space between the vehicles in front to allow for sudden slowdowns - Allowing for an “exit” to quickly change lanes if needed - Changing lanes only when necessary

Step 2: Identify the root cause

Work collaboratively with your driver to ask decisive questions that diagnose the context that led to the collision.

First:

What was the driver doing?	Driver Behavior/ Why did that happen? (Root Cause)
• Driver made a choice to drive aggressively • Driver did not scan ahead or leave enough following distance	• Driver felt pressure to complete required daily sales visits

Second:

System/Environment Factors	What Could Change at the Organizational Level?
• Meeting sales visit goals is financially incentivized, but penalized by a lack of bonus if not met • Company policy on sales visit goals doesn't allow for outside factors that could affect productivity goals • Coaching isn't provided on better planning and time management to accommodate all sales visits in the allotted time • A bike lane was not available; therefore, the bicyclist was riding in a traffic lane as allowed by local regulation	• Making adjustments to the sales bonus program that allows for better driver decisions • Communicating to drivers that their safety and the safety of others on the road is more important than meeting sales visit quotas • Periodically reviewing local laws with company drivers on road use by VRUs

Step 3: What will we commit to change?

Work collaboratively with the driver to identify the things in your control to change and commit to those changes. Encourage the driver to turn answers into specific “I will ...” or “If ... then ...” commitments.

Driver Commitment	Manager/Company Commitment
• Notify management when extenuating circumstances affect meeting daily sales goals • Sign a safe driver pledge to put safety first	• Make a recommendation to the sales leadership team to help them understand how the current policy might cause unsafe behaviors and to determine if adjustments to the sales bonus policy can be made • Include current information in standup safety meetings or messaging to drivers on local laws regarding VRU right of way

MODULE 6

COMPANY DRIVER IS REAR ENDED BY ANOTHER VEHICLE

While this type of collision is generally not considered an “at-fault” collision for the company driver, there are actions a driver can take to prevent being rear-ended.

To avoid this type of collision, advise your driver to:

- Create extra space. Use a safe following distance (rule of thumb: 3 seconds in good conditions; increase to 4–6 seconds for heavy vehicles, poor weather, or heavy traffic). More space = more time to react or steer.
- When stopped, leave a “see-the-tires” gap. At lights or in queues leave enough space so you can see the rear tires of the vehicle ahead — this gives room to steer around an obstacle and prevents being pushed into another vehicle.
- Scan well ahead to reduce surprises. Look 12–15 seconds ahead when driving (scan traffic two to three vehicles up). Anticipation prevents sudden braking and extreme speed changes.
- Signal early and slow down gently. Brake and use turn signals well in advance. Slowing down in steady, predictable increments rather than abrupt stops gives trailing drivers more warning.
- Don’t drive distracted or drowsy. Phones, in-cab tasks, and fatigue dramatically increase the risk of being struck from behind and reduce your ability to react.
- Maintain your vehicle brakes & other lights. A failed taillight or brake light removes an important warning for the driver behind.
- Manage speed to conditions. Slow down in heavy traffic, rain, snow, or where visibility is limited — stopping distance increases dramatically in poor conditions.
- Use lane selection and positioning. On multi-lane roads, keep a lane that allows you to move over safely if a tailgater approaches; avoid unnecessary lane changes that force sudden braking.

If a rear-end collision looks imminent:

Avoid maneuvers that create a worse hazard (e.g., sudden swerving into traffic).

- Release the accelerator immediately — do not accelerate. Early accelerator release reduces closing speed and gives you room to react.
- Brake firmly and steadily if safe to do so. Braking reduces impact speed; try to keep the vehicle straight (wheels forward) to preserve directional control and avoid a spin. Avoid abrupt, jerky steering maneuvers into adjacent lanes unless you have a clear escape lane.

Note: sudden swerving into adjacent lanes or onto the shoulder may create a worse collision if vehicle control is lost or you enter high-speed lanes. Only use evasive steering when there is a clear lane and time to execute it safely.

Example Scenario

Step 1: What happened?

Work collaboratively with your driver to gather the facts—what happened? This should be a conversation, not a blame-seeking investigation.

Incident <i>Describe objectively what happened</i>	When, where, conditions <i>What time? What weather? Where? Any other factors?</i>
Driver was in heavy traffic, came to a stop suddenly in a line of vehicles at a stop light, and was rear-ended by a pickup truck	- Clear day around 4pm - Highway 141, speed limit of 55mph - Heavy traffic area with multiple stoplights
Pre-collision context: What was the driver doing right before? <i>Describe what happened before the collision (e.g., speeding, distracted driving, tailgating)</i>	What could have helped avoid the collision? <i>What could the driver have done differently to avoid the collision?</i>
- Driver was driving under the speed limit - Driver was in the far left lane of a 3-lane highway	- Scanning ahead to predict the slowdown of traffic - Reducing speed given the heavy traffic - Creating extra space to allow for sudden slowdowns - Allowing for an “exit” to quickly change lanes if needed

Step 2: Identify the root cause

Work collaboratively with your driver to ask decisive questions that diagnose the context that led to the collision.

First:

What was the driver doing?	Driver Behavior/ Why did that happen? (Root Cause)
• Driver chose to drive too fast given the heavy traffic conditions • Driver did not scan the road ahead to notice the traffic slowing down for the stop light in time to leave enough room to stop • Driver did not react quickly enough to move to the shoulder to his left to avoid having the vehicle rear end him	• Driver did not anticipate the traffic slowdown • Driver was fatigued due to numerous appointments and not taking a lunch break which led to less focus and inattention; was mentally “checked out”

Second:

System/Environment Factors	What Could Change at the Organizational Level?
• Vehicle was not equipped with forward collision warning (FCW) or automatic emergency braking (AEB) to alert driver to stop in time • Company policy only addresses a maximum number of work hours in a day and does not require a lunch break/break during the day • Training on avoiding rear-end collisions is only provided to new drivers and is not included in refresher training	• Communicating to drivers the need for rest breaks to reduce fatigue • Providing safer vehicles with collision avoidance technology • Installing fatigue monitoring detection • Updating training curriculum to include rear-end collision avoidance tips and techniques

Step 3: What will we commit to change?

Work collaboratively with the driver to identify the things in your control to change and commit to those changes. Encourage the driver to turn answers into specific “I will ...” or “If ... then ...” commitments.

Driver Commitment	Manager/Company Commitment
• Report fatigue to supervisor • Take rest or lunch breaks as required • Be vigilant when driving in traffic: slow down, scan the road ahead for potential traffic stoppage, leave an out to quickly change lanes if needed	• Ensuring highest rated vehicles per Global NCAP, IIHS, or NHTSA are provided with safety features that include FCW and AEB • Updating refresher driver training to address rear-end collision avoidance • Modifying company policy to require a minimum 30-minute break during the day • Creating a company safety culture that prioritizes safety over appointment completions to reduce fatigue

Post-Collision Incident Reporting Template

Step 1: What happened?

Work collaboratively with your driver to gather the facts—what happened? This should be a conversation, not a blame-seeking investigation.

Incident <i>Describe objectively what happened</i>	When, where, conditions <i>What time? What weather? Where? Any other factors?</i>
Pre-collision context: What was the driver doing right before? <i>Describe what happened before the collision (e.g., speeding, distracted driving, tailgating)</i>	What could have helped avoid the collision? <i>What could the driver have done differently to avoid the collision?</i>

Step 2: Identify the root cause

Work collaboratively with your driver to ask decisive questions that diagnose the context that led to the collision.

First:

What was the driver doing?	Driver Behavior/ Why did that happen? (Root Cause)

Second:

System/Environment Factors	What Could Change at the Organizational Level?

Step 3: What will we commit to change?

Work collaboratively with the driver to identify the things in your control to change and commit to those changes. Encourage the driver to turn answers into specific “I will ...” or “If ... then ...” commitments.

Driver Commitment	Manager/Company Commitment