

# DISTRACTED DRIVING POLICIES & THE TRANSPORTATION INDUSTRY

## A Business Case for Workplace Safety

*TIRF in collaboration with The Co-operators®, April 2019*



### Distracted driving policies are an essential component of every workplace safety program.

Preventing and reducing distraction-related collisions in the work environment is a growing priority across businesses in both the private and public sectors. Businesses can suffer economic losses due to employee absenteeism related to injuries, damaged or destroyed goods, or roadways that are closed such that goods are delayed and/or cannot be transported efficiently. Costs are also absorbed by a substantial number of agencies that are supported by tax dollars, and ultimately costs are borne by society through increases in taxes as well as costs for services.

A consistent decline in claims and injuries has been achieved in the transportation industry in the past 20 years due to commitment among employers to higher safety standards. Employers in this industry also recognize their critical role in prioritizing strategies to prevent distracted driving among their employees and protect them from other distracted drivers on the road to ensure declines continue.



### Did you know...

- > Injuries that prevent employees from returning to work following a collision account for the largest proportion of incidents reported to the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB) in Ontario. Almost 40% of persons dying in traumatic workplace incidents in 2017 were killed in motor vehicle collisions.<sup>1</sup> More than 4,000 lost-time claims involved motor vehicle incidents in 2016.<sup>2</sup>
- > Employers with fewer than 50 staff are more at risk for work-related fatalities. Although small businesses represent an estimated 30% of Ontario workers according to the Ministry of Labour, these employers comprise slightly more than 50% of all fatalities in the workplace.<sup>3</sup>
- > Almost two-thirds (63.5%) of all workplace traumatic fatalities from 2006 to 2015 were accounted for by small businesses.<sup>4</sup>
- > According to Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI), 36% of persons dying in traumatic workplace incidents were killed in motor vehicle collisions.<sup>5</sup>
- > According to WorkSafeBC in British Columbia, motor vehicle collisions are the leading cause of traumatic workplace deaths in the transportation, construction and health care industries combined. In the transportation sector alone, 62% of all claims involved transport truck drivers.<sup>6</sup>

- > Non-commercial drivers in field sales positions or other employees who drive to service calls, meetings, events and job-related errands are similarly exposed to crash risks as are commercial drivers. In a U.S. study which matched work-related fatal crash data in 2010 from the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) with that of the Fatality Analysis Reporting System, it was determined that 51% of these victims were in transportation and material moving operations.<sup>7</sup>

## Distracted driving costs transportation companies and the industry as a whole.

In the past five years, many provincial/territorial governments have introduced escalating fines and penalties, and in response to high-profile collisions, some police services have pursued charging at-fault drivers with criminal negligence causing injury or death. According to the Traffic Injury Research Foundation's National Fatality Database, more than 300 persons are killed in Canada each year due to distraction among all types of drivers, pedestrians and other types of road users. There is little variation in the prevalence of the problem among them regardless of driver age or sex. Of greater concern, these data reveal that other road users are more often killed in distracted driving collisions, as opposed to the distracted driver.<sup>8</sup>

### Did you know...

- > The costs associated with distracted driving incidents are not limited to the time of the crash event and are instead far-reaching. Employers can expect to incur costs over a period of months, if not years, that can impact all areas of their business. Smaller companies have the most to lose since the cost of one distracted driving collision has the potential to bankrupt a company.
- > The carrier safety rating assigned to commercial truck and bus operators by a provincial licensing authority reflects the company safety record based on reportable collisions and convictions. Lower safety ratings may prompt road performance and



facility audits and can significantly influence insurance premiums. Safety ratings are publicly available and enable consumers to identify carriers with potential safety issues, although carriers are not assessed points on their Commercial Vehicle Operator Registration (CVOR) when their driver is charged with distracted driving. At present, only drivers receive fines and demerits.

- > The public relations impact of distracted driving-related workplace incidents often plays out through today's instant and extensive social media reach. This means that negative publicity from one incident can more easily have an adverse impact on the entire industry.
- > The most conservative estimates show that the dollar value of direct costs of collisions is equal to the value of indirect costs.<sup>9</sup> The costs of distracted driving behaviours and collisions are generally classified according to direct or indirect costs and may include:

Direct costs	Indirect costs
police, fire, ambulance and emergency services	reduced productivity due to a loss of skill and workplace efficiency
fines imposed on drivers/employers	training costs associated with hiring replacement workers
towing costs	collision paperwork
vehicle or equipment repair	civil suits resulting from collisions

Direct costs	Indirect costs
lost or damaged goods	replacement of lost or damaged goods
damaged infrastructure and closed highways	
interruption in supply chain	
environmental clean up costs	
legal costs for employers	
higher insurance premiums	

## Distracted driving policies and prevention initiatives have an immeasurable return on investment for transportation industry employers.

According to many employers, “safety doesn’t cost; it pays,” and investment translates into less turnover and higher retention rates of qualified and skilled drivers in an industry with a shrinking pool of potential candidates. Many companies have taken action to adopt distracted driving workplace policies, but a minority of companies remain that have not yet done so. However, there is widespread consensus in the transportation industry that the creation of a safety culture starts at the top with the development and implementation of safety policies. The implementation of day-to-day operational practices to reinforce policies is equally essential, and safety programs should not only exceed minimum standards, but also promote best practices and continual improvement.

### Did you know...

- > Hiring practices and employee retention can be positively impacted through the implementation of a clearly defined workplace safety policy designed to reduce preventable distracted driving incidents thereby reducing lost worker days attributed to injuries. Employees recognize the value placed on them by the employer’s commitment to creating a safe workplace which can lead to improved retention rates.

- > A variety of new safety technologies are being rapidly adopted by transportation companies, and a growing number of leaders and employers in the transportation industry support the mandatory adoption of proven technologies.
- > Driver monitoring technologies improve driver safety and reduce crash involvement (and its associated costs) by helping managers address unsafe driving behaviours before they result in a collision.<sup>10</sup> Employers report that the implementation of driver monitoring systems in a transparent and supportive manner has not resulted in the loss of drivers, despite some initial reluctance.
- > Forward facing cameras are an important cost-saving measure that have enabled companies to reduce legal fees as well as negative publicity by demonstrating that their drivers were not at fault in distracted driving incidents. In fact, the ability of employers to protect their employees with these technologies can help to attract and recruit new, skilled drivers.

## Leadership from transportation industry employers can affect change today.

Employers in the transportation industry agree that they simply cannot wait for change. A growing number of companies are working cooperatively; sharing knowledge and expertise to raise industry safety standards. Training opportunities combined with the use of technologies are important areas





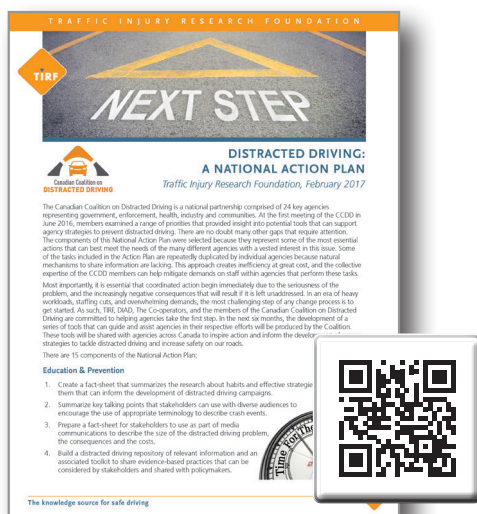
where employers can take action to discourage complacency on the road. Workplace policies enforced by employers, and reinforced by police, can help transportation companies avoid the costs of distracted driving collisions.

## Help for employers is available from the Canadian Coalition on Distracted Driving.

The Canadian Coalition on Distracted Driving (CCDD) was formed in 2016 by the Traffic Injury Research Foundation in collaboration with The Co-operators®. It includes a cross-section of concerned organizations representing several sectors: government, enforcement, health, education, communities, and industry, including insurance, automotive and trucking industries.

In 2017, the CCDD published a National Action Plan on Distracted Driving that contained 15 items. One of these items was a commitment to develop a business case that helps employers estimate the impact of distracted driving collisions on their business.

3. & 4. In <http://tirf.ca/TIRFCAD17C>



the 1<sup>st</sup> half of 2018, CCDD members contributed to the development of a draft business case for employers.

- > In the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 2018, a working group of transportation industry employers was formed to customize the business case to meet their needs and promote the implementation of distracted driving policies.

## Now available and coming soon!

- > The CCDD E-hub on distracted driving contains a wealth of resources for employers. Find out about the many technologies that can help discourage distracted driving and important questions to ask about these devices. Access summaries of the latest research and free fact sheets at [www.diad.tirf.ca/e-hub](http://www.diad.tirf.ca/e-hub).
- > The business case for employers compares the costs of prevention activities to the costs of crashes immediately following their occurrence, as well as in the short-term and longer-term. It will be published in Summer 2019.
- > During the 4th Annual CCDD meeting, taking place in Regina, Saskatchewan in April 2019, the CCDD will turn their attention to develop a series of tools to help employers implement distracted driving policies which will be released at the end of 2019.
- > More distracted driving resources and a toolkit are available through the Infrastructure Health & Safety Association <https://www.ihsa.ca/Topics-Hazards/Distracted-Driving.aspx>

For more information about the CCDD, or to be added to the distribution list for this and other CCDD updates, please contact [tirf@tirf.ca](mailto:tirf@tirf.ca).

## Sources

1. & 2. Workplace Safety & Insurance Board 2018
3. & 4. Ontario Ministry of Labour 2017
5. Colantonio et al. 2010
6. WorkSafeBC 2018
7. Byler et al 2016
8. Traffic Injury Research Foundation 2018
9. Parachute 2015
10. Horrey et al. 2012

## Traffic Injury Research Foundation

The mission of the Traffic Injury Research Foundation (TIRF) is to reduce traffic-related deaths and injuries. TIRF is a national, independent, charitable road safety research institute. Since its inception in 1964, TIRF has become internationally recognized for its accomplishments in a wide range of subject areas related to identifying the causes of road crashes and developing programs and policies to address them effectively.

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