

Motor vehicle post accident assessments

Issue 5

The importance of motor vehicle post accident assessments?

In Australia, road accidents are the most common form of work-related fatalities, injuries and absence from work and it is estimated that one quarter of all company vehicles in Australia are involved in an accident each year (TAC 2007)

Human error is a contributing factor in over 90% of these accidents (Treat et al., 1977) but importantly, lack of driver skill is not a key contributing reason in the majority of accidents. Rather, accidents usually occur because drivers make a choice to drive a certain way, for a certain purpose, at a certain time. In this light, it becomes vitally important to not only determine the 'when' and 'where', but more importantly, the 'why' an accident has occurred.

A thorough post accident assessment process whereby a supervisor/fleet manager undertakes a post accident assessment with a driver can provide this "why". This process should aim to achieve four goals:

1. To identify 'why' an accident occurred, in addition to 'how', in a blame-free environment so that an appropriate plan to reduce the likelihood of another accident can be implemented (e.g., probation, driver training, maybe even simply taking more care whilst reversing etc.).
2. To encourage drivers who have had an accident to think about all the things that may have contributed to the event. Things like their emotions, their attitude, stress levels, state of mind, distractions etc. There is much more to it than just lack of skill;

3. To display and create a culture of good accident management, thus ensuring employees understand they work for an organisation that cares about their safety on the road; and
4. To prevent the next motor accident from taking place.

How can supervisors influence driver behaviour post accident?

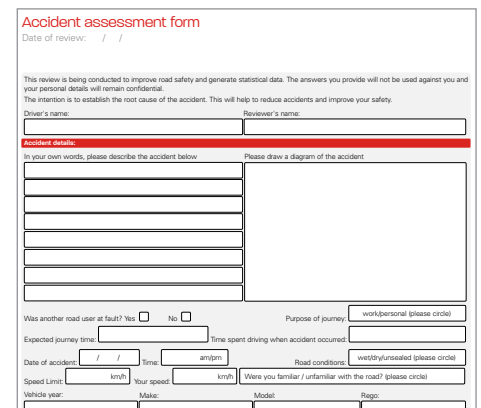
Research into the role of supervisors in improving the safety of a fleet has confirmed drivers reported a higher motivation to drive safely if they perceived their supervisor and or fleet manager value safety (Newman, Griffin, & Mason, 2008). Therefore, it makes sense and is advisable for organisations when possible to integrate fleet safety responsibilities within the roles and responsibilities of supervisors and fleet managers.

The post accident assessment process is an ideal opportunity for supervisors to build upon this relationship and positively influence driver behaviour. In our experience, the most truthful outcomes on why an accident occurred are forthcoming when completing this type of assessment within 24 hours of an incident.

Accident data and linkages to post accident assessments:

From a motor fleet insurance perspective, more organisations are becoming increasingly aware of what their accident data can tell them from a risk mitigation point of view. Because of this, the role of the insurer has become increasingly important with respect to the provision of accident data, benchmarking statistics, trend analysis and risk management advice.

Post accident assessments are effectively another piece of this puzzle, assisting organisations to identify driving trends and undesirable driver behaviours. Organisations can take this one step further by collecting infringement data and driver experience information to comprehensively risk profile their drivers.



Accident assessment form
Date of review: / /

This review is being conducted to improve road safety and generate statistical data. The answers you provide will not be used against you and your personal details will remain confidential.
The intention is to establish the root cause of the accident. This will help to reduce accidents and improve your safety.

Driver's name: _____ Reviewer's name: _____

Accident details

In your own words, please describe the accident below _____ Please draw a diagram of the accident _____

Was another road user at fault? Yes No Purpose of journey: (work/personal please circle)

Expected journey time: _____ Time spent driving when accident occurred: _____

Date of accident: / / Time: _____ Road conditions: (wet/dry/unsealed please circle)

Speed Limit: _____ km/h Your speed: _____ km/h (Were you familiar/unfamiliar with the road? please circle)

Vehicle year: _____ Make: _____ Model: _____ Regs: _____

Post Accident Assessment Form Template –Designed with assistance from Monash University's Accident Research Centre (MUARC)

Traffic and Accident Committee (TAC) (2007) *Fleet Safety*. TAC: Melbourne accessed (08/08/2007) from [here](#)

Newman, S., Griffin, M., & Mason, C. (2008). Safety in Work Vehicles: A Multilevel

Study Linking Safety Values and Individual Predictors to Work-Related Driving Crashes. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93(3), 632-644.

Treat, J. R., Tumbas, N. S., McDonald, S. T., Shinar, D., Hume, R. D., Mayer, R. E., Stanifer, R. L. and Castellan, N. J. (1977) Tri-level study of the causes of traffic accidents. Report No. DOT-HS-034-3-535-77 (TAC)

For more information:

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