

# SAFETY GAZETTE



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## Road Tests

Written by: *Tim Unger, Loss Control Specialist*

It can be tempting to judge the effectiveness of your fleet safety program by how well it meets the requirements laid out in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSR). While being in compliance with FMCSRs is necessary and an important piece of any fleet safety program, more is often required. One example of this is the practice of conducting a road test.

Part 391.31 of the FMCSRs states that drivers are not allowed to operate a commercial motor vehicle until they have first successfully completed a road test. However, there are some exceptions to this rule that allow a motor carrier to accept a valid commercial driver's license (CDL), or a road test certificate issued in the past three years completed by another carrier. In other words, a motor carrier can be compliant with the FMCSRs by accepting one of the above exceptions, and allow the driver to operate a CMV without ever seeing them drive. But, is this the best practice when it comes to fleet safety and having an effective driver screening program?

#### Why should all drivers be road tested?

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration conducted a study on the practices of the safest motor carriers, and found that more than 90% of these carriers believed a road test was an essential part of the driver screening program.

When screening an applicant for a driving position, it is often difficult to know their true capabilities. Relying on the fact that they possess a valid CDL alone is not going to give you the full story of their capabilities behind the wheel. Accepting a road test completed by another carrier means you are accepting that other carrier's criteria, which may be vastly different than yours.

Unless you personally see the applicant in action, you may have no idea how they will handle your vehicle. A properly conducted road test can help the motor carrier ensure that the applicant has the skills, experience and attitude to safely and effectively operate the vehicle they will be required to drive. Failing to complete a road test could also potentially open your company up to additional liability in the event of a serious accident. The road test can also help to identify areas where additional training or coaching may be needed to enhance the particular driver's skills. As a result, all driver applicants, regardless of their experience and including owner-operators, should be prepared to complete a road test.

### **What should a road test consist of?**

FMCSR has outlined the areas that should be tested. At a minimum, the road test should include:

1. Pre-trip inspection
2. Hooking/unhooking a trailer, if applicable
3. Placing the CMV in operation
4. Use of the CMV controls and emergency equipment
5. Operating the CMV in traffic and while passing other motor vehicles
6. Turning the CMV
7. Braking and slowing the CMV by means other than braking
8. Backing and parking the commercial motor vehicle



Again, these are only the minimum requirements to remain in compliance. A truly effective road test should also assess the driver's actions in typical vehicle operations (e.g., accelerating, braking, lane changing, turning, and maintaining a safe following distance), as well their abilities to drive defensively. The road test should also be a predetermined route that is consistent for all driver applicants and should be conducted in the vehicle-type the applicant will be required to operate if hired.

The format used for scoring the road test can be designed by the motor carrier. However, the certificate of the road test, which must be maintained in the driver file, has specific criteria outlined in Part 391.31 of the FMCSRs. A sample of a road test scoring sheet, as well as the certificate, are both available on the IAT Loss Control Portal under driver qualification forms ([losscontrol.iatinsurancergroup.com](http://losscontrol.iatinsurancergroup.com)).



## Service Shop Safety Tips For Dealerships

Written by: Orlando Gutierrez, Senior Loss Control Representative

Dealerships are filled with hazards, whether it pertains to personnel operating machinery, or working in less than ideal situations. Take a look at these tips below to improve the safety at your service shop.

**1. Never operate any machinery if you have not received the proper training.**

You must receive general safety training and specific training on the machine you intend to use.

**2. Never work alone, always use the "Buddy System."**

At least two people must be in the shop when power tools are in use.

**3. Never use machinery while impaired. Be sober and smart.**

This also includes when you are sick, too tired, stressed or hurried to work carefully or if you have taken medication that could make you drowsy.

**4. Never wear open toe shoes.**

Shoes will help protect your feet from falling objects and hot or sharp tools/objects.

**5. Never work without proper eye protection.**

Always wear safety glasses/goggles when working with, or cleaning tools. Prescription glasses must meet the ANSI Standard for safety.

**6. Always remove or secure anything that might get caught in moving machinery.**

Long hair, necklaces, dangling ID badge, jewelry, loose clothes, etc. may get caught in tools that can drag you along, resulting in serious injury or death.

**7. Never bring hands close to sharp objects/tools.**

Make sure that nothing that you do will cause you to be cut.

**8. Never create a dusty and smoky environment.**

Dust, chemicals and smoke can be dangerous to your health, so work in well-ventilated areas, minimize contamination and use proper PPE.

**9. Never leave your work area in a mess.**

Before you leave the shop all tools must be returned to the toolbox, the machine cleaned and wiped down, and the floor swept. Leave 10-15 minutes for cleanup at the end of your shift.

**10. Never remove safety guards. They are present for a reason.**

Ensure that safety guards are in place before operating any machinery.

**11. Never leave broken or damaged tools unreported.**

Broken parts or equipment can result in serious injuries. Make sure you tag the broken or damaged equipment and inform your supervisor or shop manager to get it repaired before next use.

**12. Never make any adjustments to a machine when it is in operation.**

Make sure you are competent and have permission from your supervisor. Ensure power is off, equipment is properly locked out and safety devices are in place.





# Hand and Power Tools Safety Measures

Written by: Cesar Rubio, Senior Control Representative

Hand and power tools have become such a common part of our lives that we often forget that they can create hazards to our health and welfare. The same tools that assist in making our jobs more efficient can create significant hazards in our work areas if they are improperly used or poorly maintained. Taking the use and maintenance of power tools seriously can prevent an injury to you or a fellow employee. Here are some tips you and your staff can use to make sure all hand and power tools are used properly and maintained in accordance with manufacturer's specifications.

Employees should be trained in the proper use of all tools, recognize the hazards associated with the different types of tools, and the fully understand measures to operate the tool effectively. Employers should not issue or permit the use of unsafe hand or power tools, and only allow tools that are specifically designed for the task at hand. Using a chair or a desk as a substitute for a ladder is a poor practice, and often results in an injury caused by a fall. Another poor practice is using a screwdriver as a crowbar, hammering the flat head screwdriver into a slot to open up a stubborn lid. The plastic handle can crack and cause an injury to the employee's hand. The following are safety measures that can mitigate hazards associated with the use of hand and power tools:

- Use the right tools for the specific task
- Disconnect the tool from the power source when the power tool is not in use, or being serviced
- Conduct regular maintenance in accordance with manufacturers specifications
- Before using tools, the employee should examine the tool for any damage and not use it if damage is discovered
- Employees should not carry a tool by the cord or hose
- The cord should never be jerked when disconnecting the tool from the power source
- When handling a power tool, the employee should keep their finger away from the switch button to avoid accidental starting
- Cords should be kept away from hazards (i.e. heat, oil and sharp edges)
- When hand or power tools are in use, observers should be at a safe distance from the work space
- All employees should be required to wear eye protection
- All tools designed to cut should be kept sharp
- All personal jewelry such as rings, necklaces and pendants should be removed before operating a power tool

Employers and employees should work together to establish safe working procedures. If a hazardous situation is encountered, it should be brought immediately to the attention of the management. Remember, tools can be helpful and make your effective in your job, but they can also be dangerous when not used properly.

A graphic of a yellow spotlight beam shining from the top right corner onto the text below.

## New Employee Spotlight



### **Brandon Gimbel** **ARM Senior Loss Control Representative** **Indianapolis, IN**

Brandon joined the IAT Loss Control team in July 2018. Prior to accepting the job, he gained experience as a Loss Control Specialist in the transportation insurance industry for Baldwin & Lyons, Inc. Brandon also gained a wealth of experience working as a Claims Representative for The Hartford Insurance Company. In total, Brandon has more than 11 years of experience in the insurance industry. In December of 2016, Brandon obtained his Associate in Risk Management (ARM) certification through The Institutes.



### **Nick Martin** **CDS Control Specialist** **Raleigh, NC**

Nick has been a member of the IAT Loss Control team since June, 2018. Prior to joining IAT, he assisted prospects and insureds at DMC Insurance, Inc., Northland Insurance, Inc. and Baldwin & Lyon's, Inc. In total, Nick has more than 15 years of experience in loss control, specializing in the insurance and transportation industry. In June of 2015, Nick obtained his Certified Director of Safety (CDS) credentials through NATMI.

Before moving to the insurance industry, Nick worked in the transportation industry. He spent more than 12 years with Mayflower Transit, Inc. and Graebel Van Lines. He also spent five years at TMC Transportation, a large flatbed operation. While with those companies, Nick held a variety of positions and responsibilities including credit and collections, recruiting, dispatch, load planning, safety and management.