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# Steering toward
total driver safety

If you're serious about reducing driver-related hazards and risks for your organization, the "hierarchy of controls" is one tool to keep on your list. It offers a workplace model that ranks your actions to decrease hazards from most effective to least effective.

Not all driver safety program suggestions are created equal, so you might need to invest your limited time and energy into chosen key strategies.

Most effective

Removing the driving hazard/exposure

Equipment design and controls

Manage driving behaviors

Protect the body

Least effective

If you supervise the safety of others or manage a safety program, you know it's hard to observe an employee's driving behavior. Most program management strategies try to manage driver safety through driver behavior, but that's the hardest way to do it. Effective driver safety management programs focus on system strategies instead.

Evaluating your current program

There's no one magic action to keep drivers safe; the right solution will depend on the risks your drivers face everyday as well as your crash history.

Use this helpful hierarchy tool to choose where you want to invest your time and energy; keeping in mind employee behavior is the hardest part of any safety program to manage.
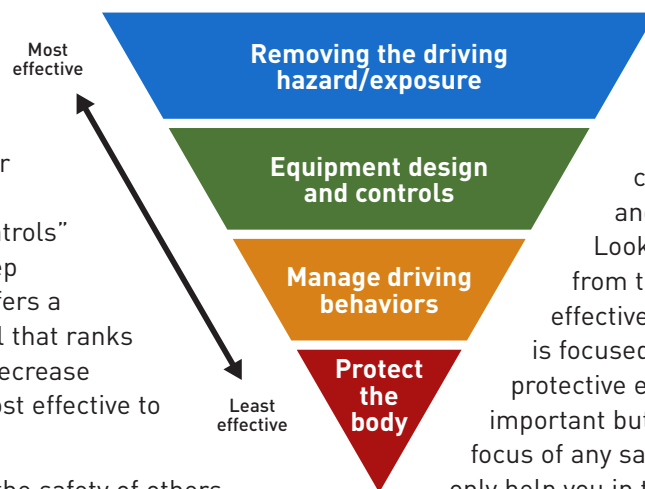
Driver hierarchy reviewed

Using this driver hierarchy of controls can pinpoint strategic and useful improvements. Looking at the diagram from the bottom up, the least effective management strategy is focused on the use of personal protective equipment (PPE); PPE is important but shouldn't be the prime focus of any safety effort. These items only help you in the event of a crash; most efforts should be focused on ways to reduce or eliminate the frequency and occurrence of crashes. If you have trouble with drivers wearing seatbelts and other protective equipment, we recommend using SAIF's safety culture resources to look for other ways to create a positive environment for your driver safety program. saif.com/learntolead

Making driving safer, easier

It's tempting to put a lot of focus on driver training, or administrative controls, to change behavior. While training has it's place, it isn't as effective as other measures in a driver safety program.

Substitution and elimination are system improvements that require more effort but have a greater impact on the driver safety program because they don't target driver behavior.

Hierarchy of controls for driver safety

This hierarchy of controls is a guide of suggested improvements you can make to your driver safety program.

Most effective ↑

Removing the driving hazard/exposure

- Drive less
- Serve customers differently
- Contract delivery services
- Customer pick-up options
- Telecommute options for employees
- Encourage/incentivize carpooling for company trips
- Teleconferences and webinars
- Use other forms of transportation such as plane, train, or bus

Equipment design and controls

- Vehicle upgrades
- Routine/regular fleet maintenance
- Vehicle/tire selection
- Parking lot design (curbs, obstacles, barriers)
- Use of car safety features
- Telematics *(could also be considered an administrative control)*
- Other forms of add-on safety feature (i.e. back-up alarms/ backup cameras)
- Active vehicle safety systems
  - Traction control
  - Stability control
  - Braking systems (anti-lock/ brake assist)
  - Forward collision warning and automatic braking
  - Lane departure warning/ assist
  - Adaptive cruise control
  - Driver attention assist

Manage driving behaviors

- Adequate travel time planned
- Change driving times to "off-peak" hours
- Skills training/defensive driving
- Vehicle monitoring telematic devices to capture driver behaviors
- Route optimization: purposeful planning - turns (like minimizing left turns), stops, and high hazard areas
- Offer/encourage driving breaks
- Accident reviews/learning teams
- Well-defined policies, such as banning use of electronic devices and distraction and fatigue prevention
- Pre-employment ride-along proficiency exam (to hire good drivers)
- New-hire driver safety training
- Training for "driving best practices," like following distance, speed, and slowing down
- Supervisor ride-along and coaching for best practices
- Pretrip safety inspections
- Review internal driving data and communicate results to employees
- Inclement weather policy
- Personal vehicle use policy and expectations for paid work time and regular vehicle care

Protect the body

- Personal adjustments: (seat, mirrors, steering wheel) for visibility, safety, and comfort
- Seatbelts/car seats
- Accident/emergency kits, winter survival gear
- Awareness of own fatigue levels
- Additional passive safety systems such as:
  - Airbags
  - Shatterproof glass
  - Crumple zones
  - Side impact bars
  - Seatbelt notification/smart restraint system
  - Vehicle accident notification systems

Least effective ↓