

**TA Dedicated**



# THE SAFETY ADVANTAGE

POLICIES AND PRACTICES DRIVING  
SUCCESSFUL PRIVATE FLEETS



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## THE REALITY OF SAFETY TODAY

When a major retailer's truck slammed into the back of the limousine, it ended the life of a passenger and family-man, maimed a well-known actor and created a situation no company big or small wants to find themselves in.

The driver was pulling a 28 hour shift. He was sleep deprived and couldn't have been more sorry for his mistake. It was the same for the company, a family-brand with health and safety deeply rooted in its mission. The driver pleaded guilty to vehicular manslaughter and the company settled swiftly, paying out close to \$100 million to the injured and their families.

The writing was on the wall and right there on the side of their truck. The failure in safety exacted the ultimate cost and it threatened to cost them even more if they didn't go the full distance to make it right.

It was bad luck and bad safety management. Training, management and technology failed the retailer. And in the end, they were responsible.

# ROAD RISKS CHALLENGE PRIVATE FLEETS

IN TODAY'S ENVIRONMENT, THE WORK OF TRUCKING IS INCREASINGLY CHALLENGING FOR DRIVERS AND FLEETS. HERE ARE A FEW OF THE REASONS:



Just in the last two years, America's motoring public has swelled by 5.7 million new drivers (Hedges & Company, 2023)<sup>1</sup>



Drivers of passenger cars are spending more time on the road—increasing their mileage 7% from 2021 to 2022. (Kelly Blue Book, 2024)<sup>2</sup>



All drivers today are navigating more dangerous conditions with 39% of major roads in the U.S. in poor or mediocre condition. (American Society of Civil Engineers, 2025)<sup>3</sup>



Distracted drivers are an ever-present danger. Deaths from distracted driving increased 11% from 2020-2021 (New York Times, 2024)<sup>4</sup>



The large number of often-distracted motorists driving on ill-kept roads makes for a dangerous and stressful workplace for truckers. According to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), there were approximately 494,000 police-reported crashes involving large trucks in 2021 of which 1% resulted in fatality and 22% resulted in injury. (FMCSA, 2021)<sup>5</sup>

For companies operating private fleets, this warrants paying special attention to worker safety issues of drivers. Most American workers believe their organization has a duty of care—a legal and moral obligation—to protect employees from unnecessary risk of harm when working or traveling on their behalf. (EHS Today, 2022)<sup>6</sup>

It's never been more important for private fleets to ensure they have the best safety program possible.

# SAFETY: BEYOND THE MORAL IMPERATIVE

Safety is good business, especially when it comes to fleet management. No longer a ‘choice’ or ‘nice-to-have,” the bar for safety in the transportation industry is high to begin with. Federal, state, local, provincial and territory regulatory requirements and monitoring bodies continue to verify compliance, primarily through FMCSA’s Safety Measurement System (SMS) for carriers as well as a host of programs sponsored by the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) that include:

**CVSA ROAD  
INSPECTIONS  
THROUGHOUT  
THE YEAR**

**ANNUAL  
INTERNATIONAL  
ROADCHECK**

**OPERATION  
SAFE DRIVER  
WEEK**

**UNANNOUNCED  
AND SCHEDULED  
CVSA BRAKE  
SAFETY EVENTS**



Compliance with governmental rules and regulations is the minimum requirement for private fleet operators. Safety has a direct impact on a shippers’ supply chain, business operations and costs. While some may rank safety behind revenue and expenses, those that prioritize safety show positive impacts and results.

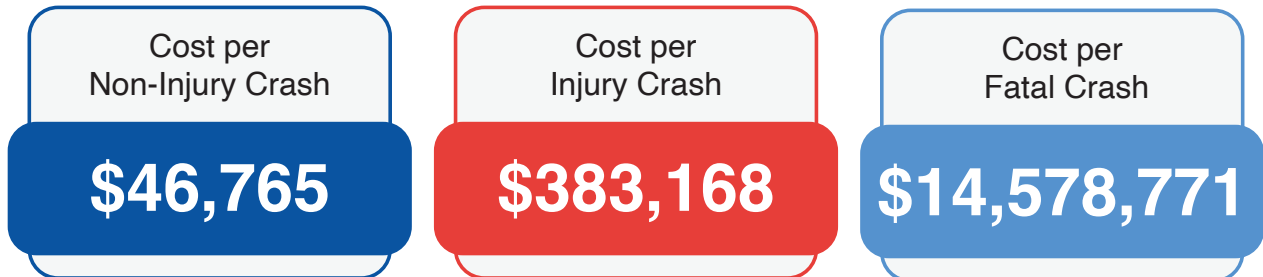
Companies maintaining rigorous safety standards not only meet compliance, but also see a 40% increase in productivity and a marked decrease in job-related injuries. (*HR Future*)<sup>7</sup>

Organizations with high safety standards understand the impact safety has on costs and profits. They prioritize safety across logistics operations and all aspects of transportation. Hours of service compliance for drivers, hazmat paperwork compliance, securing permits, equipment checks and reviews are just a few of the safety priorities in transportation now.

# POOR FLEET SAFETY IS BAD BUSINESS

FMCSA breaks down the average costs associated with a truck accident as follows:

## AVERAGE COSTS OF TRUCK CRASHES



(FMCSA, 2024)<sup>8</sup>

Every crash impacts business. The potential ramifications of incidents include the loss of time and assets, insurance claims, equipment replacement and repair, customer dissatisfaction and the threat of legal action that all lead to financial loss and increased costs. When accidents happen, they are usually followed by freight claims and dispute resolution that strains relationships between shippers and carriers.

The insurance impact is a major consideration. Insurance claims for accidents may drive private fleets' already-high premiums up, warrant cancellation or bring out-of-pocket costs for fleets with high deductibles. Furthermore, insurance providers may not handle settlements fast enough or well enough for brands who want to avoid bad publicity. The retailer mentioned previously settled with plaintiffs directly and subsequently had to fight it out with their insurers to be reimbursed.



There are many risks inherent in operating a truck fleet—the risk of a nuclear verdict following a crash being the greatest.

**ADDITIONAL AND SIGNIFICANT RISKS INCLUDE:**



**BRAND REPUTATION** consumers, customers and investors view a company’s trucks, products and policies as inseparable aspects of a brand. When company trucks crash, drive unsafely or arrive late, it tarnishes the entire brand.

**INSURANCE PREMIUMS** are one of the highest costs of operating a truck. Accidents and a poor safety record put fleets at risk of paying the maximum for policies.

**CRIME THREATS** include cargo theft and hijackings, which are on the rise, putting drivers and shipments at increasing risk.

**AMERICA’S AGING HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE** are a prime example that one in every 13 bridges in America is in poor condition, and thousands are at risk of collapsing in a collision. (CNN, 2021)<sup>9</sup>

**CLAIMS AND SERVICE FAILURE** crashes that damage freight and incidents that delay delivery can be significant. The cost to customer relationships and lost business can be even more.

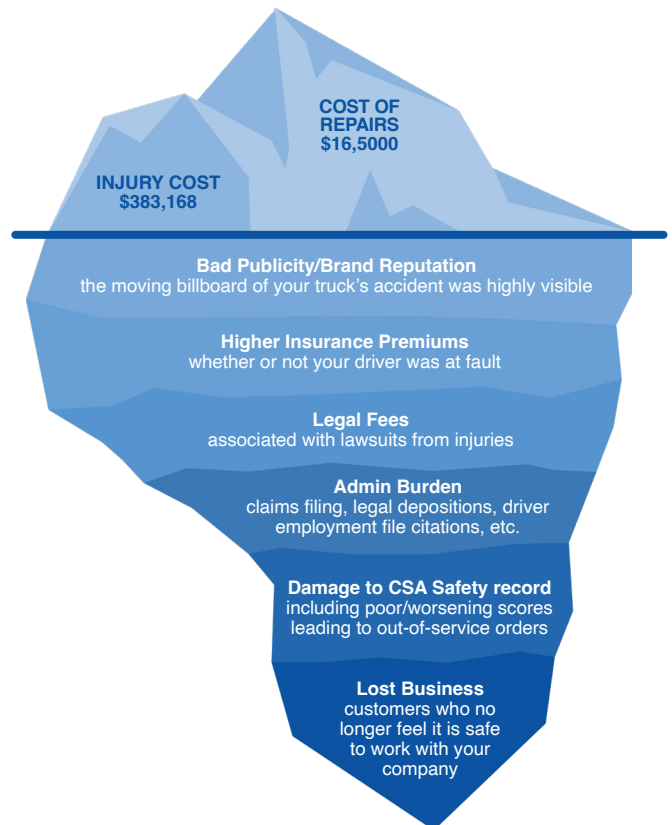
**DAMAGE TO CARRIER SAFETY RECORD** fleets’ and carriers’ Compliance, Safety and Accountability (CSA) score issued by the FMCSA determines subjectability to Department of Transportation (DOT) inspections and influences insurance ratings. A poor score can lead to out-of-service (OOS) orders in the worst cases.

**EQUIPMENT DAMAGE** to tractors and trailers can reach six figures and necessitate expensive rentals to cover the lost capacity.

**LOSS OF A DRIVER** injured drivers threaten companies’ already constricted driver pools which continue to be affected by the industry-wide driver shortage.

**FINES AND PENALTIES** failing to cease operations following an OOS order for safety violations can bring FMCSA fines exceeding \$30,000. There are also stiff fines for recordkeeping violations or allowing OOS employees to drive. (DISA, 2024)<sup>10</sup>

**HIDDEN COST OF FLEET ACCIDENTS\***  
*(average per accident)*








# BUILD A FOUNDATION AND CULTURE FOR SAFETY

A successful transportation program must be built on a foundation that promotes safety within a company's overall culture. Everyone benefits when safety becomes deeply embedded within organizations and permeates strategy, policy, practices, and culture. The positive effects are far-reaching.

According to Forbes, "a company's commitment to safety-focused retention strategies can result in a substantial reduction in costs, better regulatory compliance, improved operational efficiency and the creation of an environment that fosters sustainable growth." (*Forbes*, 2023)<sup>11</sup>



## ENACTING TRUCKING SAFETY STANDARDS CAN HELP YOU AND YOUR COMPANY:

-  Minimize risks
-  Reduce costs of potential accidents
-  Increase the probability that stakeholders and cargo remain safe on the road
-  Promote driver and overall transportation productivity and operational efficiencies
-  Ensure deliveries arrive on-time-in-full and without incident

Safety protocols are closely associated with operational efficiency. A well-maintained fleet, skilled drivers, and streamlined safety processes can improve productivity and reduce downtime due to accidents or mechanical failures. Fleets that train drivers on safety inspections, route planning and utilization of GPS technology can achieve reduced downtime, lower maintenance costs, higher asset utilization and greater compliance with regulations. These operational efficiencies support a positive work culture that benefits truckers and shippers alike.

A culture that prioritizes safety can only be achieved by the proper backing from executive leadership. It has to start at the top. Executives at the American Trucking Associations' 2023 Management Conference & Exhibition discussed the key pillars of a safety-first culture and the importance of strategies coming from the top. "Safety permeates everything," states Dan Murray of the American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI), "and safety culture research from the top is the only thing that initiates safety programs. You're not going to have investments in safety until the culture changes from the top all the way to the bottom." (Transport Topics, 2023)<sup>12</sup>

**Ongoing Training**  
**Technology Advantages**  
**Consistent Messaging**



**Strong Incentives**  
**Leadership Commitment**  
**2-Way Communication**



**THE THREE KEYS TO BUILDING A FOUNDATION AND CULTURE FOR SAFETY IN FLEETS ARE:**



Fleets that continuously promote safety through education programs and training create a culture of safety within organizations. Emphasizing driver safety is a visible sign of caring about employees. New risks and threats are neverending in trucking and new technologies for enhancing safety are constantly being introduced. Formal training programs to develop skills, correct habits and enhance the well-being of drivers are an important investment that has ROI. The best programs are company-specific, supporting a company's unique commitment to safety and tying safety to a company's overall mission. Important aspects of safety programs today often include:



### ROUTE FAMILIARIZATION TRAINING

The practice of route familiarization involves comprehensive training for drivers and operators aimed at deepening understanding of assigned routes. This includes detailed mapping of roads and in-depth analysis of potential road hazards, traffic congestion, and weather events. Training in alternate routes equips drivers to safely navigate around disruptions in order to complete deliveries and safeguard freight. Training extends to the dock and yard to mitigate potential risks and support safe pickups and deliveries.



### CUSTOMER SERVICE TRAINING

Dedicated fleet providers and their drivers become an extension of an organization, its brand, and often, a common face to customers. Safe driving is the first requirement of customer service. Training equips drivers with the skills necessary to fulfill routine and unique delivery requirements, emphasizing the importance of courteous communication and the protocols necessary to safely and professionally resolve any service-related issues.



### EMERGENCY RESPONSE TRAINING

Emergency response training helps support the safety of drivers and the public, ensuring they are equipped with the necessary skills to effectively manage unforeseen incidents on the road. Drivers learn how to swiftly engage emergency services and may participate in simulation-based training on real-life scenarios that prepare them for a wide range of emergency situations.



### TECHNOLOGY AND EQUIPMENT TRAINING

Technology tools enable drivers to optimize their routes, monitor vehicle performance, and ensure accurate tracking of hours of service. Drivers trained on how to use these tools are better able to adhere to safety protocols and achieve compliance standards.



### SPECIALIZED LOAD TRAINING

This aspect of driver education focuses on securing freight. For example, drivers are trained in specific securement techniques to prevent freight movement and weight hazards. For flatbed haulers, learning to

apply tarps and tie-downs to secure a variety of freight is essential for safely transporting cargo and ensuring it arrives at its destination undamaged.



## CONTINUOUS EDUCATION

It's critical to provide drivers with updates on legislative changes, technology advancements and new best practices aimed at enhancing safety performance. Digital learning platforms, in-person workshops, hands-on training, regular newsletters or bulletins, and direct interaction with industry experts are all important methods for continuously refreshing safety knowledge and the skills of drivers and entire fleets.



## DRIVER WELLNESS RESOURCES

In the hard-charging world of trucking topics like sleep, diet and exercise can easily be seen as luxuries. That is far from the truth. Adequate sleep has a direct bearing on road safety. Diet and exercise and other factors are strongly tied to mental health—a major issue for truckers who experience some of the highest stress levels of any industry. Teaching healthy habits and techniques for dealing with stress helps protect fleets' valuable driver pool and keeps them functioning at their highest levels. Companies that promote driver well-being create workplaces drivers want to remain in which supports retention numbers.



## HAZMAT TRAINING

Hazardous materials training is required for transporting freight that poses a risk of dangerous fumes, fire, chemical burns or radiation. Because hazmat drivers transport materials that pose threats to large populations and surrounding environments, carriers invest in continuous training for drivers, operations teams and managers. Teams need to stay up on new regulations, technologies and best practices for hauling hazmat. Drivers must pass a knowledge test to attain a hazmat endorsement (Code H) for their commercial driver's license (CDL).



## REGULATED COMMODITIES TRAINING

Drivers transporting goods like alcohol that require permits, must be trained in the unique requirements and regulations governing the freight. This includes understanding the legal requirements for transporting regulated commodities across state lines or international borders, as well as any restrictions or documentation necessary for compliance. By having a thorough understanding of permit requirements and regulations, drivers can ensure legal compliance and smooth transportation of cargo which minimizes the risk of fines, delays, or other legal consequences.





## “IN THE MOMENT” SKILLS TRAINING

This type of training involves providing drivers with real-time guidance and support to address immediate challenges or situations encountered. Whether it’s navigating through inclement weather, handling unexpected road hazards, or dealing with mechanical issues, “in the moment” training provides drivers with the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions and take appropriate actions. This training emphasizes proactive measures that can be taken to mitigate risks and prevent accidents before they occur.



## COMPLIANCE TRAINING

Clarity and understanding supports outstanding compliance on relevant regulations, including federal guidelines such as hours of service (HOS) regulations, Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations, and any specific policies set forth by the dedicated fleet provider and the shipper. This training educates drivers on the significance of adhering to all regulations, understanding that accidents resulting from any regulatory compliance breach can lead to increased errors, costs and legal ramifications.



## SAFETY AND SUSTAINABILITY AWARENESS

It’s important to inform drivers how safe driving practices contribute to fuel efficiency and reduced emissions that minimize the environmental footprint of trucking operations. Fleets that train their drivers to maintain an optimal and consistent speed and avoid aggressive behavior, such as rapid acceleration or braking, help reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emission. Reducing idling time also reduces harmful NOx fumes from pooling around facilities while also reducing the amount of GHG released into the environment.



## MANAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP TRAINING

To build a culture of safety, drivers as well as leaders need to be educated. The best training programs include all stakeholders to amplify organizational voices, train more personnel and departments, mitigate future issues, and ensure all are working towards shared goals. It’s a team effort. Drivers benefit from the support of the organization and shouldn’t be left on their own to maintain skills and stay up-to-date. Safety and safety training cannot be the sole responsibility of the safety team—fleet operations must also be involved.

## KEY 2

# FLEET EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE

Inspections that are scheduled, systematic and comprehensive help target dangers before they become disasters. Issues can be identified and fixed. Brake testing and maintenance is a priority. In CVSA's 2024 Brake Safety Week, almost 13% of trucks inspected had brake-related out-of-service violations. (CVSA, 2024)<sup>13</sup>

Not adhering to a strict preventative maintenance schedule can have serious consequences. Brake failure was behind a 2019 crash on Interstate 70 in Denver that killed four and led to the driver of a semi hauling lumber being sentenced to 110 years in prison. (CNN, 2019)<sup>14</sup>

Regular inspection and maintenance of brakes as well as engines, tires, air filters and other components reduce the likelihood of parts or systems failures while trucks are in operation. This reduces the risk of accidents due to equipment failure.

Adhering to maintenance schedules allows preventive maintenance to be performed on parts and equipment that are nearing the end of their lifespan thus avoiding failure during a run. Breakdowns can delay deliveries and can put drivers and vehicles at risk. When drivers have to exit to the side of the road they increase the risk of a roadside collision.



Adhering to FMCSA rules for major and pre-trip inspections is the minimum fleets should do. In a safety-focused culture, the emphasis is on optimal performance. Vehicles in top condition are less likely to experience compromised performance or mechanical failures.

Maximizing uptime, avoiding costly tows and expensive, forced repairs are additional benefits of being a proactive safety-minded shop. That's why investing in regular fleet maintenance is not just a regulatory compliance issue but a strategic decision that enhances road safety, protects company assets, and fosters a culture of safety.

Drivers, like any other employee, value their safety and resent being assigned equipment—or being put in any situation—that puts them at risk. Nearly all (97%) of working Americans said feeling safe is an important factor in determining where to work. (EHS Today, 2022)<sup>15</sup>

The FMCSA CSA program underscores the importance of systematic inspection, repair, and maintenance of vehicles. Fleets that achieve the lowest, indicating the best, CSA scores adhere to a schedule of inspection and maintenance. When scores get too high, the FMCSA initiates compliance reviews and may issue OOS orders. Insurers also consider carriers' CSA scores when calculating insurance premiums.



**Dedicated fleets with low FMCSA safety scores are more reliable and subject to fewer inspections and interventions, leading to fewer operational disruptions and lower insurance premiums.**



### KEY 3

## STATE-OF-THE-ART SAFETY TECHNOLOGY

The emergence and rapid adoption of fleet technology has been a catalyst for dramatic improvements in safety industry wide. Fleets of all sizes and levels of expertise are becoming more efficient as they grow in their understanding and adoption of technology and its data-driven insights. Technology is making our roads safer, and for those businesses who adopt it, supporting profitability.

One way is by helping to curb insurance costs. Some insurance companies are now giving preferential pricing to dedicated fleet providers who implement telematics and other safety protocols. As a result, shippers who work with dedicated fleet providers typically enjoy more competitive pricing and can lower their overall insurance costs by outsourcing. One study found that combining telematics with training initiatives translated into lower insurance premiums for one in four fleets. (*Insurance Business*, 2024)<sup>16</sup>



**ONBOARD CAMERAS** have a variety of uses on trucks. The two primary types being used today are: 1) Forward-facing cameras and 2) Driver-facing cameras.



#### **FORWARD-FACING CAMERAS (FFCS)**

are being used in leading-edge fleets today as training tools to correct unsafe habits and to coach safe driving skills. In the event of crashes or traffic violations, recorded videos can provide indispensable evidence in defense against potential false claims. FFCS have tremendous potential for helping fleets to mitigate risks and reduce accidents by supporting better driving. All trucks in the TA Dedicated fleet have them.

#### **DRIVER-FACING CAMERAS (DFCS)**

offer unique advantages in coaching and training because drivers' actions and behaviors can be directly observed. In particular, distracted driving can be monitored and corrected. DFCS have a growing number of features and abilities, but are almost universally disliked by truckers. (ATRI, 2023)<sup>18</sup> Many drivers express concerns over privacy and fear of retaliation. Despite this, DFCS offer another form of protection against litigation, and insurance companies are taking them into consideration when calculating rates.

## COLLISION MITIGATION SYSTEMS



are designed to prevent or reduce the severity of collisions. These systems utilize advanced sensors and software to continuously monitor the vehicle's surroundings and warn drivers when a hazard is detected. In some cases, systems will take preemptive actions to avoid or minimize the impact. Forward collision warning (FCW) and automatic emergency braking (AEB) are two of the many types of collision mitigation systems. FCW and AEB are effective countermeasures for crashes in which large trucks rear-end other vehicles. Large truck safety is expected to improve as new trucks are increasingly equipped with these systems. (IIHS, 2021)<sup>19</sup>

## ACTIVE SPEED INTERVENTION (ASI)



ensures drivers remain within safe limits by automatically preventing excessive speed. ASI has the added benefit of improving fuel economy, a key factor in achieving sustainability goals and maintaining cost-effectiveness. Fleets offering ASI represent a strategic move towards safer, more efficient, and environmentally friendly operations.

## ELECTRONIC STABILITY CONTROL SYSTEMS



are designed to automatically detect and mitigate circumstances that could lead to vehicle instability like skidding or rollovers. By monitoring various parameters, including speed, steering wheel position, and lateral acceleration, ESC systems apply corrective measures. These measures may include adjusting engine power or applying brakes to specific wheels which assists in preventing loss of control. Real-world data affirm that ESC is highly effective in reducing crashes.<sup>20</sup> (Ferguson, 2007) This technology complements ASI by ensuring that, even at regulated speeds, the vehicle remains stable under varying driving conditions.

## TELEMATICS

are a management software that integrates vast quantities of data to offer drivers and fleets insights into safety, efficiency and compliance. Telematics systems gather data from onboard sensors, GPS, electronic logging devices (ELDs), and onboard cameras. The information is used to provide real-time insights to fleets and drivers, especially regarding safety. Fleets can receive alerts regarding mechanical risks as well as driver behaviors like speeding, hard braking, or fatigue. Telematics can be used to provide drivers with critical alerts, corrections or assistance. Safety-enhancing tools include:

- **GPS tracking** to integrate with weather or traffic in real-time
- **Parts and systems sensors** to detect failures and maintenance needs
- **Compliance monitoring** of hours of service (HOS)
- **Speed and brake oversight** to identify unsafe driving behaviors
- **Onboard monitoring** to identify behaviors like driver distraction
- **Predictive functionality** from integration with AI that can help mitigate risks

A photograph showing a driver's hands on a steering wheel, viewed from the driver's perspective. The background shows a road with orange traffic cones and a stop sign. A large white quote is overlaid on the image.

“With fleets producing terabytes of data every year, more safety leaders are using the power of machine learning and predictive analytics to reduce risky driving and create more operation insights to improve performance.”

(Fleet Owner, 2023)<sup>21</sup>

## AI AND MACHINE LEARNING

are being harnessed to assess potential safety risks. Data collected from telematics, onboard cameras, systems sensors, ELDs, and environmental factors, is being analyzed and synthesized by systems leveraging AI and machine learning to see mechanical, human and environmental risks before they become safety incidents. While the application of predictive technology in transportation is still in an experimental phase, these technologies are being piloted in key areas:

- **Scheduling maintenance and repairs** based on historical and usage data
- **Identifying dangerous driver behaviors** that can be corrected
- **Suggesting safe route options** when severe weather is forecasted
- **Alerting driver and dispatcher** to drowsiness indicators
- **Flagging patterns** of dangerous driving for coaching

# CHOOSE A PARTNER DEDICATED TO YOUR SAFETY

Safety needs to be top of mind for every fleet today. Standards demanded by employees, customers and communities are too important to be anywhere but on the leading edge. That makes continuous training and all the benefits of technology a given for fleets.

There is no couching the fact that mastering the keys to creating a safety culture is challenging. That is a prime motivator for outsourcing to a dedicated fleet provider today. A dedicated partner that provides advanced turnkey programs for safety will ultimately transfer your shipping risks from your organization to their operation.

Programs proven and tested over a wide range of customers, investments in top technology, and committed safety personnel, put a leading edge safety culture within reach for private fleets who are overwhelmed by today's demands.



## ENSURE YOUR DEDICATED FLEET PROVIDER CHECKS ALL THE SAFETY BOXES

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- A company-wide mission to achieve excellent safety performance results
- Safety-driven standard operating procedures (SOPs)
- Experts in government regulations and compliance on staff
- Expertise offering ongoing, tailored training in safety and service
- Committed safety leadership involved in industry associations
- Robust technology offerings including fleetwide telematics
- A focus on driver well-being and safety grounded in ethics and human concern
- A track record representing brands and safeguarding their reputations
- Relevant certifications for safety personnel and drivers
- Demonstrated performance in OTIF and customer satisfaction

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