How to Monitor Driver Performance in Just 10 MINUTES A DAY
To truly change behavior, you need to address violations in a timely manner but more importantly understand the events surrounding the violation. It’s hard work! It requires time and effort, often across multiple departments and involves your entire staff.

This ebook helps you formulate a plan whereby in ten minutes a day, you can monitor driver behavior within a tight, streamlined strategy. Consider it the “8 Minute Abs” of driver performance. How can you best take advantage of the limited time you have in a day to get the best results possible? After reading this ebook, you will be able to develop a, solid, stable routine that works for you and will ultimately better protect your staff and patients and the community you serve.

Monitoring driver performance regularly is key to creating a culture of safety within your organization.
Why Monitoring Matters

You can’t manage what you don’t measure.

Driver safety doesn’t just affect crews and passengers; it affects the entire community. With increased adrenaline, lights and sirens, and all the other distracted drivers on the road, the need for the appropriate assessment of driving performance is imperative to achieve a meaningful culture of safety.

NHTSA analyzed data from the past 20 years and found that each year, the nation averages 29 fatal crashes involving an ambulance, resulting in an average of 33 fatalities annually. While one-fourth of those fatalities are inside the ambulance at the time of the crash, in the majority of fatal crashes involving an ambulance, the driver or passenger of another vehicle is the one who is killed.

NHTSA estimates that an average of 1,500 ambulance crashes per year result in injury, with 46% of injuries occurring among people inside the ambulance at the time of the collision.

Data from every fatal crash involving an ambulance for the last 20 years shows a similar pattern of results—most ambulance occupants are not wearing seat belts during crashes.

NHTSA research found that whether ambulance occupants wear seat belts or not significantly predicts the severity of occupant injuries and fatalities. And unbelted providers are doing more than just getting injured: They also risk injuring their patients. Occupant-to-occupant contact was identified as a source of the injuries sustained by patients, and in at least two cases, these injuries were fatal.

When EMS arrives at a scene and patients are loaded into the ambulance, they and their families should feel safe knowing help has arrived. Because of this, the EMS profession has an incredible responsibility; keeping our patients safe during a call is paramount to good care and should be a priority for any EMS crew transporting a patient.
Who Should Monitor

It’s not just one individual’s responsibility to monitor driver performance. Different job functions monitor different activities as summarized below.

**Safety Officer**

If your organization has a Safety Officer or someone devoted to safety, they are in the ideal position to monitor driver performance as they have a vested interest in improving the culture of safety within your organization.

Safety officers should monitor:
- Violations
- Insurance premiums
- Accidents (with and without injuries)
- Speed
- G forces
- Hard braking

**Fleet Manager**

Many people don’t realize that driver performance is directly related to vehicle maintenance. The more aggressive the driving, the more wear on the vehicles.

Fleet managers should monitor:
- Frequency of repairs related to driving (especially brakes and tires)
- Cost of repairs related to driving
- Fuel consumption

You may find that your fleet maintenance costs are not simply the cost of doing business, and there is serious room for improvement through improved driver performance.

**Executives**

As an executive in your organization you are responsible for the health of the employees as well as the health of the organization.

Executives should monitor:
- Contractual compliance
- Trending costs related to accidents (with and without injuries)
- Trending cost related to fleet maintenance
- Employee satisfaction
- Patient satisfaction
Rewarding vs. Reprimanding

Before you begin monitoring driver performance, have a plan in place on how you will manage issues that are revealed. Many organizations find that rewarding staff for good driver performance and immediate coaching to address violations to be an effective method.

Use the data you collect to help your crew understand acceptable safety habits and how they are performing. Although monitoring systems can create a “big brother” perception, once medics understand it’s for their own protection, they accept it.

Gamification focuses on designing an experience that touches people on an emotional, rather than transactional, level and motivates them to achieve their goals. And who doesn’t like a good game? Find out what motivates your crew and design a game or challenge around it.

Check out how you can reward good driver behavior with Road Safety Poker.
Make sure your goals are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound (SMART).

Now that we’ve gone through why you should monitor, who should do the monitoring, and some basics for rewarding good drivers, it’s time to determine next steps for your efforts. In anything you do, it’s important to set a goal for yourself, and monitoring driver performance is no different.

Goals are great – they help us prove how effective we are, keep us focused, and push us to be better. The thing is, though, goals are totally useless if they’re not grounded in reality. That’s why it’s critical to set SMART goals. (You’ve just learned that SMART is an acronym, but your goals should still, indeed, be “smart.”)

Here’s what we mean by setting a SMART goal:

- **S** Specific
  - Do set real numbers with real deadlines. Don’t say, “I want less accidents.”

- **M** Measurable
  - Do make sure that you can track your goal. Don’t hide behind fallbacks like — “It’s the cost of doing business”

- **A** Attainable
  - Do work toward a goal that is challenging but possible. Don’t try to take over the world in one night.

- **R** Realistic
  - Do be honest with yourself, because you know what you and your team are capable of. Don’t forget any hurdles you may have to overcome.

- **T** Time-bound
  - Do give yourself a deadline. Don’t keep pushing towards a goal you might hit “some day.”

If you’ve never set a goal for driver performance monitoring before, start by aligning your monitoring goals with your department’s goals. For example, if you’re monitoring from a safety perspective, your goal might be to reduce preventable crashes by 10% in a certain period of time. Once you’ve achieved this goal and feel like you can go deeper, attach your goal to a cost savings.
Be Prepared

To successfully monitor driver performance in just 10 minutes a day, you’ll need to have some things prepared in advance. Even accessing files or data could take up to 10 minutes a day. You can limit that as much as possible by creating a daily plan upfront to help you streamline your process.

If you are considering investing in a paid tool to help aid your monitoring, there are a handful that help with measuring driver performance. For example, Road Safety from ZOLL includes a real-time monitoring tool as a part of its complete system. The tool not only tracks the vehicle activities like seat belt usage, speed and gforces but also ties the activity to the individual driver for true accountability.

For now, let’s talk about a few ways you can monitor driver performance with resources that are easily accessible.

Set up an anonymous way for employees to provide feedback on calls. This can be as simple as note cards and a box or you can do something slightly more formal by putting together an anonymous online survey. Online survey software can vary in price from free to $50 a month. Enforce the review process by making peer reviews after each call mandatory. Avoid too many open-ended questions. It makes the data harder to analyze.
Empower your patients to provide feedback on your performance.

There are automated survey solutions specifically for patients. These surveys allow you to:

- Quantify your agency’s performance
- Gain insight to edge out the competition
- Encourage great service by pinpointing high and low performers
- Meet the requirements of the Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services (CAAS) which was established to encourage and promote quality patient care in America’s medical transportation system
- Meet the requirements of Triple AIM (improving the patient experience of care (including quality and satisfaction); improving the health of populations; and reducing the per capita cost of health care)
- If possible, tie the survey to the appropriate crew AND driver. This helps with accountability.

Many insurance companies are using apps and other low cost devices to collect useful stats, such as vehicle speed and hard braking (think Snapshot from Progressive). There are also a variety of smartphone applications that have been created to help ensure the safety of drivers.

Smartphone apps using the device accelerometer have the ability to monitor your risky behaviors along with time and then provide suggestions for improvement. Some apps simply monitor trips while others take your breaking habits, acceleration and cornering into consideration. Find an app that provides reporting capabilities for easy monitoring. The apps are relatively inexpensive (if not free) and some may require an OBD-II transmitter.

IMPORTANT NOTE: These apps are not designed for emergency response. While these systems aren’t completely reliable and are associated with the vehicle and not the driver, at the very least they can help you determine if there is possibly a driver performance issue in your organization. If you determine driver safety to be a concern or area that needs improvement, look into a system specifically designed for emergency response that is proven to improve driver performance.
Your 10-Minute Checklist

Now that you have set up a platform for monitoring your driver performance, you can implement a new habit of opening your survey tools and checking your emails first thing in the morning to find relevant information.

1 minute
Get an update from your counterparts on daily accidents and violations.

2.5 minutes on peer reviews
Check your daily peer review reports and look for responses that deviate from the norm. While an occasional bad peer review is acceptable if this is a pattern then you need to address the issue.

2.5 minutes on patient surveys
Check your daily patient survey reports and look for responses that deviate from the norm. While an occasional bad review is acceptable if this is a pattern then you need to address the issue.

4 minutes on driver safety app reviews
This may take a little longer if your monitoring device isn’t associated to the driver. Check your daily reports and look for actions that deviate from the norm or from company policy like speeding. If you discover an issue, you will need to connect the driver to the vehicle in question then proceed with a plan for improvement.
Why monitor something if you aren’t going to fix it?

By integrating this 10-minute plan into your schedule, you will have a very solid understanding of crew driver performance. Monitoring is a great first step towards improving overall safety. The next step, of course, is reacting! Whether you provide immediate coaching or implement a safety system with real-time audible feedback to immediately correct behavior, you should have a plan and process in place to effectively react and manage risks.

No matter what the goal, be sure to monitor your metrics over time. If you decide to begin spending more than just ten minutes for your driver performance monitoring efforts, your success should correlate with the additional work you’re putting in!

SOURCES: