



INTRODUCTION

When an employee is a professional driver, there is a chance that the employee may experience an accident during the course of their career. Accidents can be shocking and traumatic experiences depending on the severity of the accident. Employees may also panic during an accident if they do not know how to handle and report it. Presented in this lesson are some general guidelines that employees can follow if they are in an accident. The order in which these guidelines are implemented will depend on the severity of the accident and injuries.

NOTE: Each state has different reporting requirements, so employees should become familiar with reporting requirements for states that they drive through or in.

SECURING THE SCENE

Once an accident has occurred, employees should do the following to prevent additional damage to their, and the other party's, vehicle or persons:

- Get your vehicle far off the road as possible unless doing so will increase the danger, cause additional damage or inflict injury to you or the other party.
- Ensure that the vehicle is in park before turning off the engine. Once the engine has been turned off, employees should activate their four-way emergency flashers.
- Secure the area by turning on your flashers and set out warning devices (if available). Warning devices may include:
 - 3 bidirectional triangles
 - 6 fuses
 - 3 flares

Note: Depending on the cargo, employees may only be allowed to use the 3 bidirectional triangles.

- When setting out bidirectional triangles, employees should walk towards oncoming traffic holding an assembled triangle in front of them to ensure maximum visibility.
- It is recommended that employees wear a reflective vest or jacket when securing the area to ensure that they are visible to other drivers.

CHECKING FOR INJURIES AND NOTIFYING AUTHORITIES

After an employee has secured the scene, they should do the following when checking for injuries and notifying authorities:

- Take a moment and check yourself for injuries. If you have no immediate injuries, take a calming breath and check the other parties for injuries.
- Give reasonable assistance to any injured person. Reasonable assistance means calling for emergency services, if they are not on scene, and keeping any injured person warm and dry.

DRIVING: ACCIDENT REPORTING

- Do NOT move an injured person unless they are in immediate danger or there is a chance of additional injury.
- When contacting law enforcement, employees should provide the following information:
 - The exact location of the accident using mile markers or landmarks if necessary.
 - The number of injured people and how severe their injuries are.
 - The extent of vehicle and property damage.
 - Your contact information in the event that they need to contact you for additional details.
- Do NOT leave the scene to contact law enforcement. Leaving the scene is against the law.
- After notifying the proper authorities, employees should call their company and notify them of the accident. Employees should follow their company's accident procedures.

DOCUMENTING THE ACCIDENT

NOTE: Some states require that employees not leave the scene until all required paperwork has been completed.

When documenting an accident, employees should do the following:

- Use provided forms and complete as much information as possible. Information may include the following:
 - Witness information
 - Investigating officer information
 - Vehicle information (for all parties involved)
 - Injuries (both yours and the other party's)
 - Contact information for all involved persons
 - Sketches or drawings of the scene
- Only write down the facts of the accident. Do NOT place blame or write down your emotions.
- Take pictures of the scene with either a digital, film, or work-only cell phone camera. When taking pictures, employees should include different angles of the road, landmarks, and license plates (including those of witness vehicles).
- Take pictures of your injuries (if applicable).
- Collect witness statements.
- Turn in all required reports as soon as possible to all required departments and authorities.



CONCLUSION

Accidents can be stressful and traumatic events for any professional driver. Stress can be reduced when employees know how to handle and report accidents. Accident reports are crucial pieces of documentation in an accident. By reporting an accident report in a timely manner, employees can help protect both themselves and the company from monetary and legal damages.