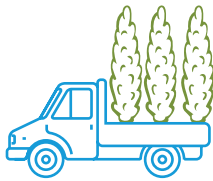




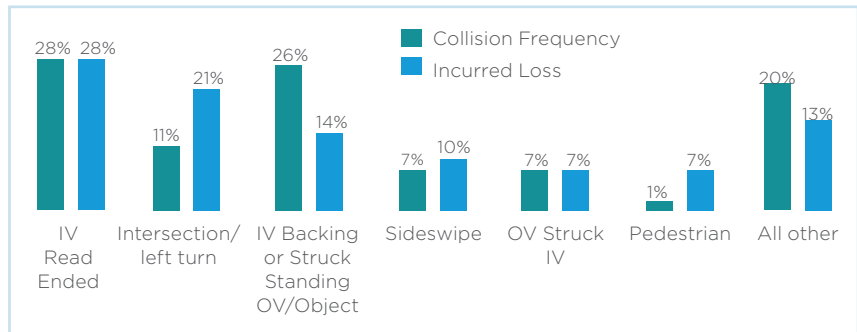
# ARBORIST AND LANDSCAPER VEHICLE SAFETY



## BRANCHING OUT ON BEST PRACTICES

For Arborist and Landscapers, operating vehicles is often incidental and not a primary focus of the business. While the degree of exposure may be greater in some operations, best practices apply to all types and sizes of contractors.

Arborist and Landscapers have unique vehicle safety challenges, including tow trailers with blind spots that may obscure clear vision of other vehicles, objects, or pedestrians. Loaded trailers may also impact a truck's ability to stop quickly and navigate sharp turns. Other hazards occur when vehicles are parked at job sites adjacent to active roads. These scenarios increase the possibility of collisions with moving vehicles or hit and run incidents. To minimize vehicle crashes drivers should be fully qualified, trained, and supervised. Vehicle weight and size should also be considered as the driver may be required to hold a commercial driver's license (CDL) and may be regulated by the DOT.



Insured vehicle rear-ended other vehicle collisions have the highest collision frequency and incurred loss due to speed, stopping distance or distracted driving. Insured vehicle backing or struck standing other vehicle or object collisions have high frequency due to blind spots, mirrors, and distracted driving. Intersection/left turn collisions have lower collision frequency but higher severity due to U-Turns, merging, and because they often involve serious personal injuries.

Written standards for drivers are important because a contractor may be held liable under negligent entrustment for damages if it can be proven that the contractor entrusted a company owned or non-owned vehicle to a driver; the driver was unlicensed, incompetent or reckless; the contractor knew or should have known that the driver was unlicensed, incompetent or reckless; the driver was negligent in operation of the vehicle; and the driver’s negligence resulted in damages.

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**BEST PRACTICES**

To improve bottom-line results, focus on the following industry-related best practices:

**Driver Evaluation**

The Hartford’s Driver Evaluation Form can help you establish a formal review process. It includes additional criteria beyond the MVR. Determine what’s acceptable, what will require remedial training, disciplinary action and/or disqualification of driving privileges. Key components include:

- Years of driving experience
- Past work history
- Number of vehicle accidents/collisions (within the last 3 years)
- Serious moving violations (within the last 3 years)
- Other moving violations (within the last 3 years)

**Vehicle Safety**

- Establish a written safety policy outlining the duties and responsibilities of all employees who operate vehicles on company business
- Evaluate driving employees (including hired and

VEHICLE SAFETY SELF-ASSESSMENT		
	Yes	No
<b>Driver Selection</b>		
Motor vehicle record checks		
Driver evaluation written standards		
Personal vehicle minimum insurance		
Personal vehicle driver qualifications		
<b>Driver Training</b>		
Vehicle Operations (policies and procedures)		
Initial defensive driving		
Refresher driver training		
Remedial driver training		
Collision reporting procedures		
Backing		
Operating with Trailer		
Job site traffic control		
Equipment familiarization		
Cargo/Equipment securement and security		
<b>Driver Supervision</b>		
Distracted Driving Policy		
Driver Self Reporting policy		
Check ride/ride-a-longs		
Telematics		
Personal use of company vehicle policy		
<b>Vehicle Maintenance inspections</b>		
Documented scheduled maintenance		
Pre and post trip inspections		
<b>Loss Records and Investigations</b>		
Formally investigate all collisions to determine preventability and appropriate driver action		
Maintain collision records and review trends		
Locating collision reporting materials in all vehicles		

- non-owned) by reviewing their driving history and Motor Vehicle Records
- Provide training for driving employees with training materials, classroom sessions and on-demand webinars
- Provide supervision for driving employees to reduce distracted driving from texting and cellphone usage
- Perform proper maintenance and inspection of vehicles by utilizing appropriate reports
- Review loss records and investigations to help prevent future incidents

## ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS



Focus on the following industry-related best practices to minimize backing, striking standing vehicles or objects, and other vehicles striking your vehicles:

### Job-site Preplanning

- Determine the volume, composition and peak flows of the traffic at the location where you'll be working.
- Evaluate any sight limitations, complicated intersections or confusing roadside conditions.
- Direct traffic away from your equipment and minimize interference with traffic.
- Include a traffic control plan as part of the bid process that includes proper traffic control measures such as specific warning devices, directional signals, traffic signs, lighting, barricades, fences, and/or flaggers that are used and maintained in accordance with state and local requirements. If flaggers are used, ensure they have training or certifications required by your state.

### Parking/Stopping

Park vehicles completely off the road whenever possible. If stopping a vehicle in the travel lane is the only option:

- Never park a vehicle in the travel lane near the crest of a hill.
- Turn front wheels into a curb on a downhill and away from the curb facing uphill wheels when parking on a hill to prevent the vehicle from rolling into a traffic lane and set the parking brake.
- Use hazard flashers, day or night, if pulled off on the shoulder of the road or forced to stop in a travel lane. At night, drowsy drivers who see only taillights on a vehicle may follow the lights thinking your vehicle is still moving and rear-end your vehicle.
- Place emergency warning devices to alert other drivers that your vehicle is stopped, and do not direct traffic unless properly trained.
- Only properly trained clients should direct traffic. Therefore, even the smallest job may require a traffic control plan as part of the bid process.

### Towing

Vehicles behave differently when towing a load. Be sure to consider these factors to enhance your safe driving practices:

- Maintain more space between you and other drivers.

- Remember that you'll need a longer stopping distance when braking.
- Keep in mind that your center of gravity may be higher because of your load.
- Reduce speed around corners.
- More care will be needed when turning and backing.
- Check to see if chain and strap tie downs are rated for the capacity of your load.
- Always allow more travel time for the safety of your personnel, the general public and your equipment.
- Retrofit trailers with back up or rear-view cameras.

### Backing

Avoid backing whenever possible. When necessary, try to back vehicle into a parking space for better visibility when you are approaching the parking area and when leaving. When backing:

- Walk around your vehicle to ensure you have safe clearance before moving the vehicle.
- Look underneath the vehicle, and check the "blind areas" you will be moving through.
- Keep entertainment systems off and open the driver's window to hear any warnings.
- Move vehicle as soon as possible after assuring all is clear.
- Start up slowly to allow other vehicles and pedestrians, who may have unexpectedly approached, to safely move away.
- Tap horn in congested areas to warn others you will be moving and/or recruit someone to assist you.
- Stop the vehicle and recheck the area when in doubt.
- Retrofit vehicles with back up or rear view cameras.

### Cargo/Equipment Securement and Security

Safely and securely load, transport, and unload cargo and equipment of all sizes, weights, and shapes by:

- Securing materials properly in vehicles and trailers to prevent shifting when the vehicle is in motion.
- Taking precautions to properly secure materials in open vehicles (e.g., tarpaulins, tie-downs, covered containers, etc.).
- Ensuring securement devices are in good condition and are drivers instructed in applying the securement devices and checking the devices while en-route.
- Ensuring company and drivers know the Department of Transportation's Hazardous Materials Regulations including placarding and driving regulations if hazardous materials are transported.

## Equipment Familiarization

- Familiarize drivers on equipment to minimize unintentional equipment misuse and abuse, and to show a newly hired driver the proper way to operate specific equipment for maximum efficiency and minimum maintenance.
- Demonstrate special controls, including loading and unloading devices.
- Instruct drivers on how to make a proper vehicle inspection.

## Routes and Schedules

Establish routes and schedules and explain to drivers to avoid congested areas, poor road conditions, high crash frequency areas, and roads with restrictive conditions, such as low or narrow overpasses or bridges with restricted weight limits. Avoid U-Turns by simply going around the block.

## Get Quotes Today

**Protect your workers and equipment today!  
Get quotes for pay-as-you-go workers'  
compensation and commercial vehicle  
coverage with E-COMP.**

**GET QUOTES TODAY**

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