



Safe Driver Award Program Rules United States Postal Service Edition



FOREWORD

To all Postal Personnel:

The standard of professional safe driving performance required to earn Safe Driver awards demands the best of driving skills. It also requires postal management to strictly observe award rules to uphold these high standards. The greatest benefit your postal fleet will derive from the National Safety Council's Safe Driver Award Program comes from carefully applying award rules to every reported incident.

Since the program was instituted in 1930, the millions of Safe Driver awards issued attest to the professional driving skills of those drivers enrolled and their ability to avoid traffic incidents. Such safe driving performance indicates that management has guided and assisted personnel in avoiding painful injuries. The program also helps conserve skilled human resources, promote public goodwill, reduce operation costs, and eliminate expensive incident claims.

Safe Driver awards are the trademark of the expert driver and are recognized as the nation's highest honor for professional safe driving. They are issued in a variety of employment situations involving the operation of motor vehicles.

Every attempt has been made to make these Safe Driver award rules complete. But if you have a question about any portion of them, please contact the National Safety Council at 1-800-621-7619.

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1. AWARD PLAN

1.1 RECOGNITION

National Safety Council Safe Driver awards are the recognized trademark of professional drivers who have proven their skill in avoiding traffic incidents. They are the highest honor for professional safe driving performance.

1.2 PERFORMANCE

The award program is more than a way to reward drivers with good safety records. The rules spell out the safety performance expected of professional drivers: the ability to operate a motor vehicle without having a preventable incident. The award rules are a yardstick by which drivers can measure their performance and by which supervisors can measure the performance of individual drivers. When this performance standard is understood by both drivers and supervisors, it becomes a logical, fair, and workable basis for effective safety supervision. These rules are for Safe Driver award administration only. They are not to be used for disciplinary purposes. Discipline should be a separate consideration and disciplinary action is covered by specific postal regulations.

1.3 DESCRIPTION OF AWARD

The Safe Driver Award Lapel Pin is a gold-colored metal shield bearing the words "National Safety Council Safe Driver Award" and the figure of a driver behind the wheel. A wallet card is also available upon request (see Figure 1).

1.4 PERMANENT RECORD

The local U.S. Postal Service official in charge of the administration of the Safe Driver Award Program maintains an up-to-date roster of all drivers certified for Safe Driver awards. A driver's status under the award program can be verified at any time by contacting that official.

1.5 EFFECTIVE DATE

The rules governing the administration of the National Safety Council Safe Driver awards, as contained herein, are not retroactive and shall be effective September 11, 1999. Awards will be issued in accordance with provisions in effect during the time each driver's record was established.



2. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

2.1 POSTAL INSTALLATIONS ELIGIBLE TO USE NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL SAFE DRIVER AWARDS

Every postal installation using one or more government, contract, or private motor vehicle(s) operated by postal personnel on official business is eligible.

2.2 POSTAL DRIVERS ELIGIBLE OR INELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL SAFE DRIVER AWARDS

(A) Eligible: Every postal employee whose assignment includes the driving of a government, contract, or privately owned motor vehicle and who drives without being involved in a preventable motor vehicle incident and has not had his/her driving privilege revoked or suspended.

Explanatory note: The phrase “postal employee whose assignment includes the driving...” was chosen in preference to a set number of hours or days of driving per week.

Although this definition of eligibility imposes judgment on the part of the local postal authority, it also eliminates discrimination based on a fixed schedule of hours, days, or miles. It is recommended that in establishing a schedule of driving assignments, especially at smaller post offices, consideration be given to minimize the number of persons required to drive postal vehicles so that there can be concentration of training, supervision, and control over those with assigned driving duties. Such postal employees could then be included in the National Safety Council’s Safe Driver Award Program.

Postal employees to be excluded from the Safe Driver Award Program are those who might drive only on an emergency, stand-by basis, or for a limited number of hours during the week or days during a month.

(B) Ineligible: The following are excluded from participation in the program:

1. Contractors and contractor’s personnel.
2. Postal supervisors and employees who drive only during seasonal rush periods, holidays, vacations, on a stand-by basis, or other intermittent periods.
3. Postal employees authorized to operate privately-owned motor vehicles for transportation to and from routes.

3. EMPLOYER INCIDENT RECORD REQUIREMENTS

3.1 INCIDENT

A motor vehicle incident is any occurrence involving a postal owned or operated vehicle which results in death, injury, or property damage.

3.2 INCIDENT REPORTS

(A) A complete incident reporting program is a necessity. Installations should make every effort to secure prompt, thorough, and accurate incident reports on all incidents described in 3.1. Time spent instructing drivers and supervisors in proper incident reporting is a sound investment in incident prevention. Accurate, complete incident reports can help management determine where drivers are having problems so that training focuses on correcting the problems. Thus, safety and management personnel should not accept sketchy and incomplete incident reports. Such reports should be returned to the person who prepared them as many times as necessary to get the essential information.

3. EMPLOYER INCIDENT RECORD REQUIREMENTS (Con't)

3.2 INCIDENT REPORTS (Con't)

Standard Form 91 (**Operations Report of Motor Vehicle Incident**). Every incident must be reported by the driver on Standard Form 91. This report must be submitted to the driver's supervisor, who is to report the incident using the Safety Health Management Tool (SHMT) Event reporting module.

3.3 SAFE DRIVER AWARD RECORDS

(A) Records are necessary. Installations requesting Safe Driver awards for their eligible drivers must certify to the National Safety Council that the awards are based on accurate records of each driver's experience. Guesswork and dependence on recollections are not acceptable. Complete and accurate incident reports should be used to determine whether a driver is eligible for an award.

(B) Safe Driver award records are used for determining only whether a postal driver is eligible for an award. They are not appropriate for determining discipline and are not to be used in the tort claim process.

3.4 MORE THAN ONE POSTAL EMPLOYEE INVOLVED IN SAME INCIDENT

A single incident involving two postal drivers, each driving a vehicle on official business, may be charged as a preventable incident against the records of both drivers. This will happen when investigation shows both drivers failed to drive so as to prevent the incident. A preventable incident, in which two drivers are in the same official vehicle, is charged only to the driver operating the vehicle at the time of the incident.

4. JUDGING PREVENTABILITY

4.1 DETERMINING PREVENTABILITY

When an incident is reported by a driver, the designated postal official/supervisor must determine whether the incident was preventable. If non-preventable, the driver is still eligible for his/her next award. If preventable, the driver will not be eligible but may appeal such decision to the District Safe Driver Awards Committee.

4.2 DEFINITION OF PREVENTABLE INCIDENT

A preventable incident is any occurrence involving a vehicle operated by a postal employee on official business which results in property damage and/or personal injury, regardless of who was injured, what property was damaged, to what extent, or where it occurred, in which the driver in question failed to do everything he/she reasonably could have done to prevent the occurrence. A preventable incident will be used only to determine the rights of the postal employee to be awarded a National Safety Council Safe Driver Award.

4.3 COMPOSITION OF SAFE DRIVER AWARD COMMITTEE

A Safe Driver Award Committee shall be established at the District level. Such committees shall be composed of the following:

1. A management representative
2. A safety representative
3. A driver having the longest vehicle incident free record; or pay location driver having the longest no-incident record
4. An ad-hoc member (to be added to the existing three-member committee when the employee-driver involved in the incident is from a craft other than the permanent craft member of the committee)

Majority rule applies in committee determination of preventability. In the event of committee deadlock, the Area Human Resources Analyst/Safety will be the determining authority.

4. JUDGING PREVENTABILITY (Con't)

4.4 INCIDENT REVIEW

Duties of the designated postal official/supervisor. All incidents should be reviewed by the installation's designated official and recorded on PS Form 1768 (Safe Driver Award Committee Decision) which shall be filed with PS Form 4582 and noted on the driver roster. Decisions should be rendered in line with the definition of a preventable incident (see examples in Section 7). Prior to rendering a decision, the incident must be discussed with the driver involved as required on PS Form 1768. When extenuating circumstances make it difficult to reach a decision and an additional opinion is necessary, the incident report may be submitted to the District Safe Driver Award Committee. If necessary, the District Committee may submit the case to the Area Office, ATTN: Human Resource Analyst/Safety for review and final decision.

Procedure for submitting report to the area office. Reports can be submitted to each Area Office for the following reasons:

1. The District Safe Driver Award Committee is unable to decide whether an incident is preventable;
2. A driver appeals and requests a review of his/her case by higher authority.

The following is a list of information that must be provided to the Area Office. Lack of any information or failure to reconcile differences of opinion as to factual information prior to submitting the incident for review will make it necessary to return the request for further clarification:

(A) INCIDENT Report

1. Fill out PS Form 1769 and Standard Form 91 completely.
2. Be sure to use the check-off portion of the report and complete all sections including vehicle speeds. Indicate whether speeds are known or estimated.

(B) INCIDENT Diagram

1. Diagram should be detailed and as close to scale as possible.
2. Diagram should include the following:
 - a. Proper identification of items shown.
 - b. Measurements that have a bearing on the incident such as street widths, skid marks, sight distances, etc.
 - c. Sight restrictions such as buildings, trees, shrubbery, etc.
 - d. Path(s) of the vehicle(s) involved prior to and after impact.
 - e. Other relative items.
 - f. Directions, i.e., North.

(C) Narrative Report

It is important to know what the driver did leading up to and just prior to the impact. Frequently, only the actions of the other driver involved in the incident or the other circumstance involved are detailed. These are important, but it is equally important to know the following:

1. Your driver's observations and actions leading up to the incident.
2. When your driver first noted the emergency situation developing.
3. What defensive driving techniques were used? When was this action taken?

4. JUDGING PREVENTABILITY (Con't)

(D) District Decision

It is important to know what the driver did leading up to and just prior to the impact. Frequently, only the actions of the other driver involved in the incident or the other circumstance involved are detailed. These are important, but it is equally important to know the following:

1. Your driver's observations and actions leading up to the incident.
2. When your driver first noted the emergency situation developing.
3. What defensive driving techniques were used? When was this action taken?

(E) Driver's Statement

When an incident is submitted for review, include with the report a statement from the driver explaining why the driver believes the incident could not have been prevented and a full description of any unusual or extenuating circumstances.

(F) Supplementary Information

Supplementary information is often helpful in determining the preventability of the incident. Examples of this type of information are:

1. Witness statements
2. Incident investigator's reports (PS Form 1700)
3. Police reports
4. Driver's supplementary statement
5. Report from the maintenance department
6. Photographs

Only a complete presentation of the facts will enable the Area Office to render a fair and impartial decision. The total exhibits should be carefully reviewed before it is sent to the Area Office to insure a clear presentation of the facts and to eliminate contradictions or ambiguities. When statements of drivers, witnesses, or investigators are at variance, management should indicate what has been accepted as fact in the incident report before sending it to the committee.

5. COMPUTING SAFE DRIVING RECORD

5.1 PROVING PERIOD

The proving period was eliminated in 2001. A driver will not have to start over if a preventable incident occurs in the first three years.

5.2 ANNIVERSARY DATE

A driver's anniversary date can be determined by the date the driver becomes eligible to receive the National Safety Council Safe Driver Awards. This date may be their hire date or the date they begin driving full-time. The anniversary date becomes the driver's regular date to earn succeeding awards. This date does not change unless the driver is absent from work or is assigned to non-driving duties.

5. COMPUTING SAFE DRIVING RECORD (Con't)

5.3 PENALTY TIME

A driver is penalized 12 months of driving time for each preventable incident he or she incurs. The penalty is figured from the driver's anniversary date and not from the date of the incident.

Example: A driver earned a three-year award August 23. If he or she drives 12 months without a preventable incident, that driver will earn a four-year award the following August 23. If the driver has a preventable incident before earning a four-year award, he or she is penalized 12 months of driving time. A four-year award will be earned 24 months from the date the driver earned the three-year award. For each preventable incident, the date of the next higher award is delayed one more year as a penalty (see Figure 2).

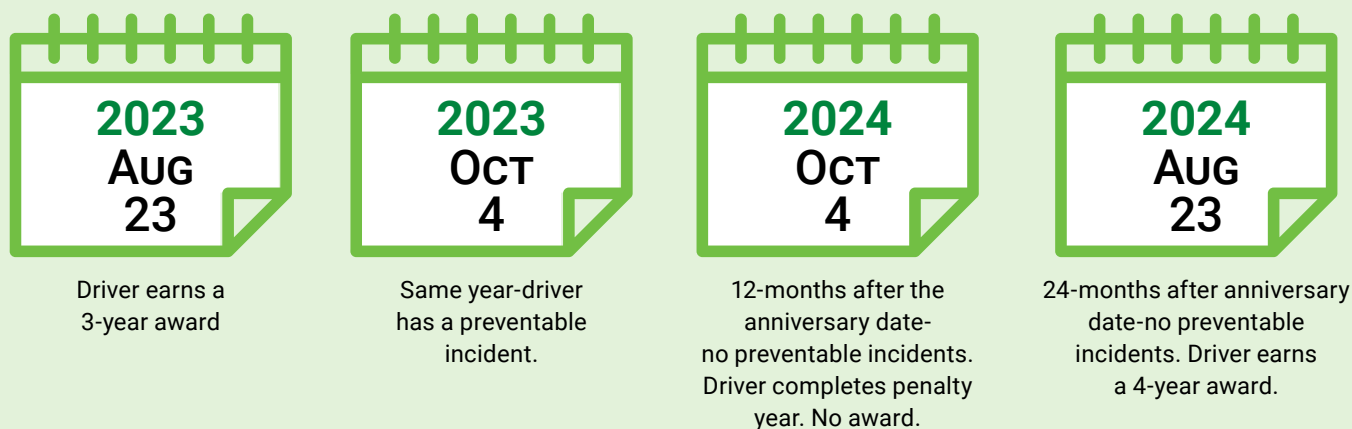


Figure 2

5.4 ABSENCES FROM WORK

A driver shall be allowed to accumulate an absence of 15 working days, exclusive of vacation or military leave, in any award period based on the driver's anniversary date. This non-driving grace period may be composed of absence due to illness, seasonal layoff, and other temporary non-driving assignments (see Figure 3). Any absence in excess of 15 working days changes the driver's anniversary date.

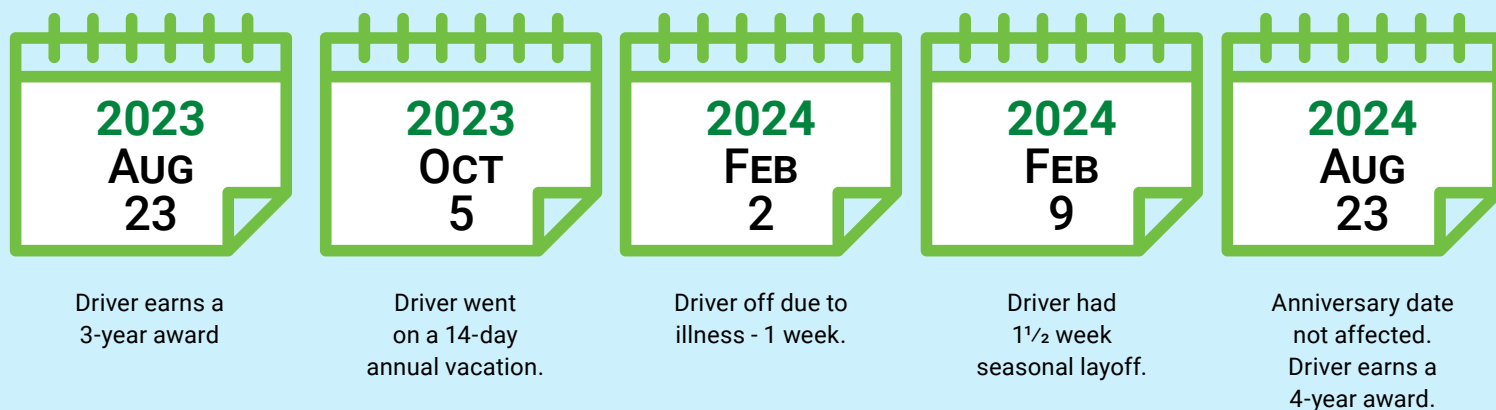


Figure 3

5. COMPUTING SAFE DRIVING RECORD (Con't)

5.5 NON-DRIVING TIME

Drivers enrolled in the Safe Driver Award Program do not lose accumulated safe driving time when assigned to jobs that do not require the operation of a motor vehicle. Any record accumulated prior to such assignment is continued upon their return to driving duty.

Example: A driver accumulates 40 non-driving working days during the 12 month period following the last award. This is 25 working days in excess of the permissible 15 day grace period. Using one calendar week for each 5 working days (or fraction) of non-driving time, this driver's next award will be earned on September 27, 5 weeks beyond the previous anniversary date (see Figure 4).

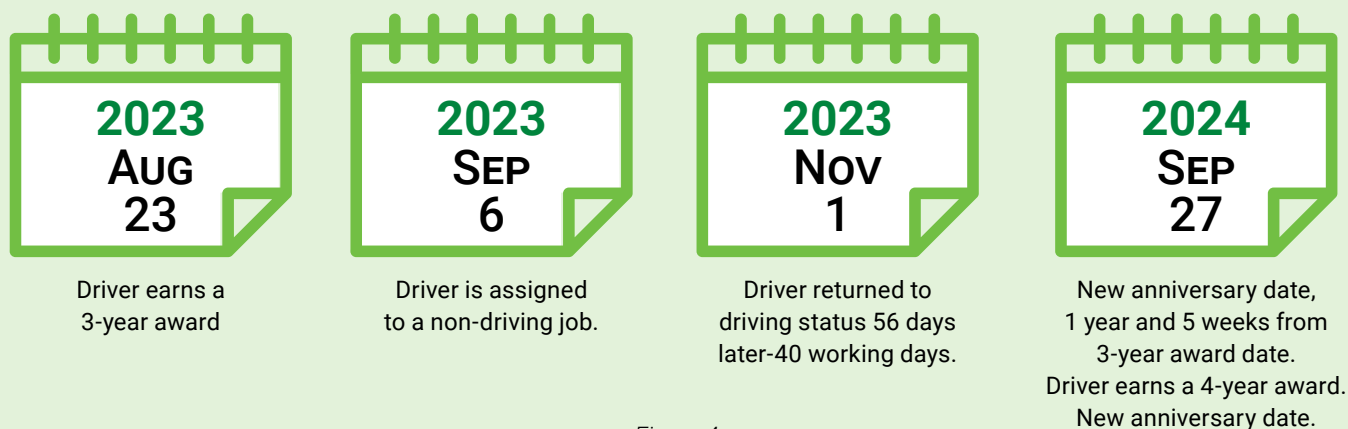


Figure 4

5.6 MILITARY SERVICE

If a driver accumulates safe driving time before entering military service, the driver will be given credit for the accumulated time upon completing military service and upon resuming driving duties for the Postal Service.

Example: A driver accumulates 6 months of safe driving time toward the next award and is called to military service. After completing military service and resuming employment as a driver, the driver is credited with this 6 months of safe driving time. Upon completing another 6 months of safe driving time, the driver is eligible for the next award (See Figure 5).

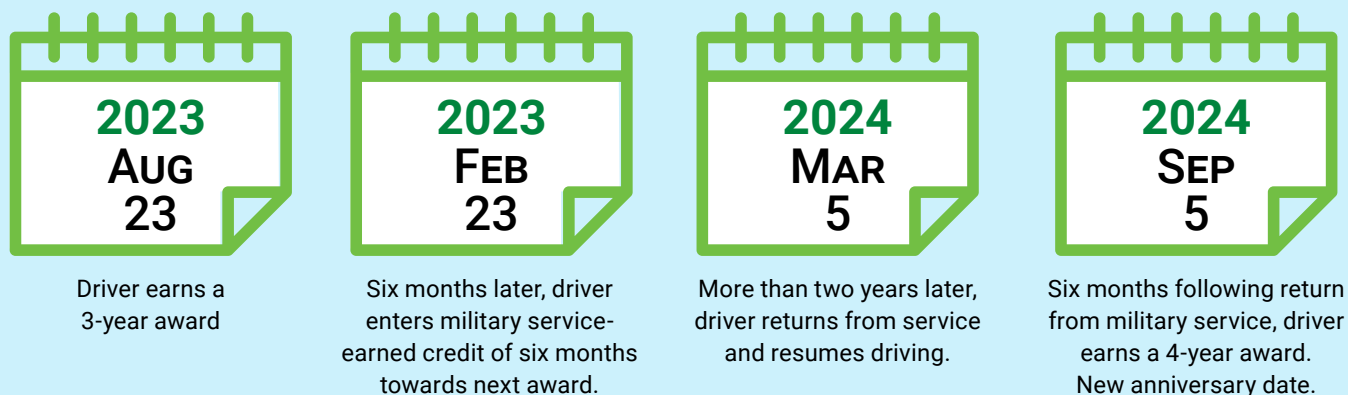


Figure 5

5. COMPUTING SAFE DRIVING RECORD (Con't)

5.7 CREDIT FOR INDIVIDUAL PREVIOUS SAFE DRIVING TIME

Safe driving time accumulated under previous employers may be credited to drivers at the option of the U.S. Postal Service, under the following conditions:

- (A) If the employee received National Safety Council Safe Driver awards from previous employers, these awards can be used as a basis for computing the driver's current status. Intervening safe driving time accruing to the driver, and not accounted for by the receipt of a Safe Driver award, must be computed from information presented in a certification from previous employers. Such a certification should show the complete driving history between the date of the last Council award received and the present time. Date of all incidents (both preventable and non-preventable) incurred by the driver during the period should be shown. A description of such incidents should be obtained to determine whether they were preventable.
- (B) The fact that a previous employer was not a member of the National Safety Council does not prevent a driver from receiving recognition for prior safe driving time. Such previous safe driving time can be computed if accurate certification by letter from previous employers shows dates of employment, separation, and all incidents. A description of each incident must accompany the letter of certification so that the present employer can adjudge the incidents in accordance with the Safe Driver Award Rules.
- (C) Safe Driver awards, cards, or certificates issued by organizations other than the National Safety Council will not be accepted automatically as credit for prior safe driving time. The variety of such plans and the differences in methods of adjudging incidents and computing safe driving time make it impossible to accept them at their face value in computing safe driving time under the National Safety Council Safe Driver Award Rules.
- (D) The continuous employment record of a driver requesting credit for prior safe driving time must be reviewed and reported. Intervals of employment at non-driving occupations must be reported as part of this continuous record. Just as non-driving time is verified as a pre-employment check, it must be ascertained that such time did not conceal a bad driving interval. Interruption of a driver's complete record by "time unaccounted for," will preclude acceptance of records covering the periods prior to that time.

6. ORDERING OF AWARDS

6.1 SAFE DRIVER LAPEL PINS AND WALLET CARDS

The most current Safe Driver Award order forms can be downloaded at nsc.org/usps. Submit your completed Safe Driver Lapel Pin order form by:

Mail: National Safety Council
Awards Dept PO Box 558
Itasca, IL 60143

Email: usspsawards@nsc.org
Online: nsc.org/USPS

Awards will arrive within seven days of the National Safety Council's receipt of the order form. To learn more about the Safe Driver Award Program, please call Customer Relations at 1-800-621-7619.

The postal official is not to submit driver experience or report the occurrence of incidents to the National Safety Council. Shortages and errors of orders should be reported directly to the National Safety Council.

6. ORDERING OF AWARDS (Con't)

6.2 MILLION MILE AWARD PLAQUES

An employee of the Postal Service may qualify for the Million Mile Award Plaque if his/her assignment includes the driving of a government, contract, or privately owned motor vehicle and he/she drives without being involved in a preventable motor vehicle incident for a cumulative total of one (1) million miles or thirty (30) years. The nominee's driving record must be based on mileage or years, the total of which adds to either a minimum of 1,000,000 miles or 30 years. The mileage or years need not be consecutive. Miles or years in which the applicant has had a preventable incident must be deducted. If the applicant has had two or more preventable incidents in one year, all mileage or years from the appropriate number of succeeding years must also be deducted.

The most current Million Mile Award order form can be downloaded at www.nsc.org/usps/awards.aspx. Submit Completed order forms by:

Mail: National Safety Council
Awards Dept PO Box 558
Itasca, IL 60143

Email: usspsawards@nsc.org
Online: nsc.org/USPS

To learn more about the Safe Driver Award Program, please call Customer Relations at 1-800-621-7619.

7. A GUIDE FOR DETERMINING PREVENTABILITY

7.1 DEFENSIVE DRIVING

The National Safety Council's Safe Driver awards are designed to recognize expert safe driving performance, not just average performance. The award is based on the concept of defensive driving-the ability to avoid incidents in spite of the wrong actions of other drivers and in spite of adverse driving conditions. By being alert to incident inducing situations, defensive drivers recognize the need for preventive action in advance and take necessary precaution to prevent the incident.

7.2 STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE

Incidents involve so many factors that it is impossible to set hard and fast rules for classifying them as preventable or non-preventable. The designated postal official and/or each member of the District's Safe Driver Award Committee must make this determination. In making these decisions, the question must be asked: "What standard of safe driving performance is expected of our drivers?" Mediocrity is condoned if standards of safe driving performance are lax. Drivers respect a strict interpretation of the rules if these interpretations are made consistently and impartially. The following information can serve as a guide in determining the preventability of incidents.

7.3 PERSONAL VEHICLES AND PERSONAL USE OF EMPLOYER VEHICLES

Incidents involving drivers operating their own vehicles during off-duty hours shall not be charged against the Safe Driver award. However, if employees operate their own vehicles on official business, incidents sustained by them must be adjudged according to these rules.

Sometimes company-owned vehicles are permanently assigned to employees for business and personal use. Preventable incidents involving such a vehicle operated by the company employee, whether for company business or not, shall be charged against the Safe Driver award.

7. A GUIDE FOR DETERMINING PREVENTABILITY (Con't)

7.4 INCIDENTS INVOLVING MORE THAN ONE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE DRIVER

When two or more U.S. Postal Service vehicles are involved in the same incident, each driver may be charged with a preventable incident, regardless of which one was primarily responsible for the occurrence. Although two or more postal drivers may be riding in the same vehicle, a preventable incident will be charged against the person operating the vehicle.

7.5 WITNESS STATEMENTS

Each driver involved in an incident usually contributes to it in some degree. If the other driver admits fault, it usually only means that he/she sees how their actions contributed to the situation. Admission by the other driver of being at fault, a record of the other driver being cited for a traffic violation and witness or police statements of exoneration for the company driver are not, in themselves, conclusive evidence for adjudging an incident "non-preventable." It is possible that the postal driver contributed to the situation in some manner.

Statements of exoneration are generally based on legal responsibility without respect to the definition of preventability used in these Safe Driver Award Rules. Consequently, a careful study must be made of all conditions to determine how the employee in question contributed to the situation.

Unless thorough investigation indicates that the employee in question could not have avoided involvement by reasonable defensive driving practice, the following types of incidents will be regarded as preventable.

7.6 INTERSECTIONS

It is the responsibility of professional drivers to approach, enter and cross intersections prepared to avoid incidents that might occur through the action of other drivers. Complex traffic movement, blind intersections, or failure of the other driver to conform to law or traffic control devices will not automatically discharge an incident as not preventable. Intersection incidents are preventable even though the professional driver has not violated traffic regulations. Failure to take precautionary measures prior to entering the intersection is a factor to be studied in making a decision. When a professional driver crosses an intersection and the actions of the other driver indicate possible involvement (e.g. excess speed, crossing lanes in turning, coming from behind a blind spot), the decision based on such entrapment should be preventable.

7.7 BACKING

Practically all backing incidents are preventable. A driver is not relieved of responsibility to back safely when a guide is involved in the maneuver. A guide cannot control the movement of the vehicle; therefore, the driver is responsible for checking all clearances.

7.8 FRONT-END COLLISIONS

Regardless of the abrupt or unexpected stop of the vehicle ahead, your driver can prevent front-end collisions by maintaining a safe following distance at all times. This includes being prepared for possible obstructions on the highway, either in plain view or hidden by the crest of a hill or the curve of a roadway. Overdriving headlights at night is a common cause of front-end collisions. Night speed should not be greater than that which permits the vehicle to stop within the distance illuminated by the vehicle's headlights.

7.9 REAR-END COLLISIONS

Turning movements, like passing maneuvers, require exacting care. Squeeze plays at left or right turns involving other vehicles, scooters, bicycles, or pedestrians are the responsibility of the driver making the turn. Failure to signal, properly position the vehicle for the turn, check rear view mirrors, check pedestrian lanes, or take other defensive action should be considered. Sudden turns by other drivers should be carefully examined. You may find that your driver failed to take precautionary action based on the movement of the other vehicle immediately preceding the incident. U-turns by your driver that result in a collision are preventable.

7. A GUIDE FOR DETERMINING PREVENTABILITY (Con't)

7.10 PASSING

Failure to pass safely indicates faulty judgment and a driver's failure to monitor the total traffic scene around the vehicle. Unusual actions of the driver being passed or of oncoming traffic might appear to exonerate a driver involved in a passing incident; however, the entire passing maneuver is voluntary and the driver's responsibility.

7.11 BEING PASSED

Sideswipes and cut-off involving a professional driver who is being passed are preventable when the professional driver fails to yield to the passing vehicle by slowing or moving to the right where possible.

7.12 LANE ENCROACHMENT

A safe driver is rarely a victim of entrapment by another driver when changing lanes. Similarly, entrapment in merging traffic is an indication of unwillingness to yield to other vehicles or to wait for a break in traffic.

Blind spots are not valid excuses for lane encroachment incidents. Drivers must make extra allowances to protect themselves in areas of limited sight distances.

7.13 GRADE CROSSINGS

The professional driver is responsible for preventing collisions with fixed rail vehicles (trains, street cars, etc.), at grade crossing, in traffic, in a rail yard, switch area, or on private property. Before parking a vehicle across a rail siding, the driver must determine if it is safe and permissible to do so. Also, the driver must be ready to move his or her vehicle if conditions change by the movement of rail cars during the parking interval.

7.14 OPPOSING VEHICLES

It is extremely important to check the action of the postal driver involved in a head-on or sideswipe incident with a vehicle approaching from the opposite direction. Exact location of vehicles prior to and at the point of impact must be carefully verified. Even though an opposing vehicle enters your driver's traffic lane, it may be possible for your driver to avoid the collision.

For example, if the opposing vehicle was in a passing maneuver and your driver failed to slow, stop, or move to the right to allow the opposing vehicle to re-enter its own lane, your driver has failed to take action to prevent the occurrence. Failing to signal the opposing driver by flicking the headlights, or sounding the horn should also be taken into account.

7.15 TURNING

Turning movements, like passing maneuvers, require exacting care. Squeeze plays at left or right turns involving other vehicles, scooters, bicycles, or pedestrians are the responsibility of the driver making the turn. Failure to signal, properly position the vehicle for the turn, check rear view mirrors, check pedestrian lanes, or take other defensive action should be considered. Sudden turns by other drivers should be carefully examined. You may find that your driver failed to take precautionary action based on the movement of the other vehicle immediately preceding the incident. U-turns by your driver that result in a collision are preventable.

7.16 PASSENGER INCIDENT

Passenger incidents in any type of vehicle are preventable when they are caused by faulty vehicle operation. Even though the incident did not involve a collision, it must be considered preventable if your driver stops, turns, or accelerates abruptly. Emergency action by the U.S. Postal Service driver to avoid a collision that results in passenger injury should be checked to determine if proper driving prior to the emergency would have eliminated the need for the evasive maneuver.

7. A GUIDE FOR DETERMINING PREVENTABILITY (Con't)

7.17 PEDESTRIANS

Traffic regulations and court decisions generally favor the pedestrian hit by a moving vehicle. Pedestrian movement at mid-block or from between parked vehicles does not relieve a driver from taking precautions to prevent such incidents. Even if speed limits are posted or the area is placed with warning signs, your driver may be traveling too fast for conditions. School zones, shopping areas, residential streets, and other areas with special pedestrian traffic must be traveled at reduced speeds equal to the particular situation. Bicycles, motor scooters, and similar equipment are generally operated by young, inexperienced operators. The driver who fails to reduce speed when this type of equipment is operated within his or her sight-distance has failed to take the necessary precautions to prevent an incident. Keeping within posted speed limits is not taking the proper precautions when unusual conditions call for voluntary speed reduction or accelerates abruptly. Emergency action by the U.S. Postal Service driver to avoid a collision that results in passenger injury should be checked to determine if proper driving prior to the emergency would have eliminated the need for the evasive maneuver.

7.18 WEATHER

Adverse weather conditions are not a valid excuse for incident involvement. Rain, snow, fog, sleet, or icy pavement have never caused an incident. These conditions merely increase the hazards of driving. Failure to adjust

driving to prevailing weather conditions should be cause for deciding an incident preventable. Failure to use safety devices provided should be cause for a preventable decision when it is reasonable to expect the driver to use such devices.

7.19 ALLEYS, DRIVEWAYS, AND PLANT ENTRANCES

Incidents involving traffic originating from alleys, driveways, plant entrances, and other special intersecting locations should be carefully analyzed to determine what measures the professional driver might have taken to avoid the occurrence. Failure to slow, sound a warning, or yield to the other driver can be considered cause to judge such an incident preventable.

7.20 FIXED OBJECTS

Collisions with fixed objects are preventable. They usually involve failure to check or properly judge clearances. New routes, strange delivery points, resurfaced pavements under viaducts, inclined entrances to docks, marquees projecting over the traveled sections of road, and similar situations are not, in themselves, valid reason for excusing a driver from involvement. Drivers constantly must be on the lookout for such conditions and make the necessary allowances.

7.21 PRIVATE PROPERTY

When a driver is expected to make deliveries at unusual locations, construction sites, etc., or on driveways not built to support heavy commercial vehicles, it is the driver's responsibility to discuss the operation with the proper authorities and to obtain permission prior to entering the area.

7.22 PARKING

Unconventional parking locations, including double parking, failure to put out warning devices, etc., generally constitute evidence for judging an incident preventable.

Rollaway incidents from a parked position should be classified preventable. Runaway incidents from a parked position shall be classified preventable.

7. A GUIDE FOR DETERMINING PREVENTABILITY (Con't)

7.23 MECHANICAL FAILURE

Any incident caused by mechanical failure that reasonably could have been detected by the driver, but went unheeded, should be judged preventable. It is the driver's responsibility to report unsafe vehicle conditions for repairs and to obtain immediate repairs where continuing operation might result in an incident. When mechanical difficulties occur unexpectedly during a trip, and a driver upon discovery, failed to check with his or her supervisor for emergency instructions prior to an incident, the incident is preventable.

An incident caused by mechanical failure that results from abusive driving should be considered preventable.

7.24 NON-COLLISION

Incidents involving overturning, jack-knifing, or running off the road may result from emergency action by the driver to avoid being involved in a collision. The U.S. Postal Service driver's actions prior to involvement should be examined for possible errors such as speed too fast for conditions or lack of other defensive practices.

7.25 MISCELLANEOUS

Incidents caused by projecting loads, loose objects falling from the vehicle, loose tarpaulins or chains, doors swinging open, etc., resulting in damage to the vehicle, cargo, or other property or injury to persons, are preventable when the driver's action or failure to secure them are evidenced. Cargo damage, resulting from unsafe vehicle operation, is preventable by drivers.

A defensive driver is one who commits no driving errors and makes allowances for the lack of skill or improper driving practices of the other fellow. A defensive driver adjusts to and compensates for unusual weather, road, and traffic conditions, and is not tricked into an incident by the unsafe actions of pedestrians and other drivers. By being alert to incident-inducing situations, the defensive driver recognizes the need for preventive action in advance and takes the necessary precaution to prevent the incident. A defensive driver knows when it is necessary to slow down, stop, or yield the right-of-way to avoid involvement.



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