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| Irrespective of fault, road crashes and incidents involving a CRS-registered vehicle that result in property damage and/or bodily injury, whether operated by a CRS employee or partner organization, [must] be reported. A **Vehicle Accident Notice Form** must be completed for ALL incidents [not considered negligible] to document the Vehicle Asset Files and personnel action (if appropriate). In addition to being a record for the Country Program, information on this form is forwarded to the CRS Global Automobile Insurance agent to monitor accident frequency around the world for assessment of insurance premiums and other management action. The form should be forwarded to Finance/Global Cash Management via an electronic copy to AccidentReports@crs.org, with copy to the Country Program’s Regional Office.***Policy: POL-OSD-VEH-002 – Vehicle Insurance*** |

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|  |  | Driving incidents include road crashes as well as safety and/or security-related events impacting CRS or partner staff which may inhibit our ability to carry out our mission. The vast majority of road crashes and safety incidents are minor…. and preventable. How people drive and operate vehicles is |

determined by a variety of factors. Some factors are acceptable and controllable while others are neither acceptable nor controllable. These factors contribute to the frequency and severity of road crashes and road safety incidents, and should be considered by managers when orienting and testing Drivers and Authorized Users, and while planning and authorizing travel.

Drivers and Authorized Users are required to report to the VMU and HoOps all road crashes and security incidents involving a CRS vehicle using the ***Vehicle Accident Report Form***. For more serious incidents, a country program senior manager will need to follow up, and may conduct a detailed investigation to determine fault. The investigator must prepare a separate report to justify any decisions made about Driver/User responsibility and recommended penalties to impose.

A signed copy of every Vehicle Accident Report and Investigation Report must be filed in the Vehicle Asset File. Details should be entered into the VMS as well.

The following risk factors impact drivers and can lead to road crashes and road safety incidents:

**Exposure:** the amount of travel**,** distances covered, time on the road, numbers and types of vehicles sharing the roads, and quality of the infrastructure.

**Behavior and driver decisions:** Driver understanding of and compliance with the rules of the road; knowledge of traffic patterns; Driver age, experience, training and skill; decisions governing speed and maneuvering; alcohol consumption and drug use; and the perception and acceptance of risk. Inexperienced and poorly-trained drivers tend to minimize risk, are slow to react and make poor decisions, and are often inconsiderate of other road users.

**Status of the infrastructure:** road engineering (e.g., for specific speeds), maintenance and repair; signage; barriers; traffic lights or round points; insufficient crosswalks, sidewalks or pedestrian overpasses (and people’s willingness to use them); and bicycle or moped paths. Poor infrastructure requires good decision making, quick reactions, and full concentration.

**Vehicle attributes:** includes elements other than design, such as older vehicles being driver that are no longer road worthy; weak vehicle inspection systems or inefficient, irregular use of such systems; installation of counterfeit parts; inadequate maintenance and repair; officials who are unwilling or unable to curb poor driving techniques and the use of dangerous vehicles; worn or improperly inflated tires and worn brakes; inoperable exterior lights.

**Other factors:** the vulnerability and risk acceptance of other road users (e.g., pedestrians, bicycle rand motorcycle riders); vehicles with design flaws (e.g., large blind spots, no lack of airbags);on-use of safety devices (e.g., seatbelts, child seats, motorcycle helmets); road designs that are unforgiving of driver use errors; and unavailability of good emergency and post-trauma medical facilities.

All of these are recognized as major risk factors for both light and heavy vehicles and are leading causes of major, serious road crashes and safety incidents. CRS Drivers must be oriented to and trained in defensive driving techniques, and monitored by managers to ensure compliance. When a road crash or incident occurs, it is management’s responsibility to investigate the causes, and not just accept what the Driver tells us in his/her report. It is imperative to question passengers and any witnesses to validate what is in the report. Overseas, in most countries where CRS works, it is unwise to rely heavily on police reports; local officials are often poorly trained in investigative techniques, don’t understand the rules of the road or the causes of road crashes, and corruption may lead to inappropriate or incorrect conclusions.

A road crash or safety incident is preventable if the Driver could have done something to avoid it. CRS Drivers are expected to drive defensibly, and to protect their passengers, other road users, and the equipment they are responsible for. Which Driver was primarily at fault, who received a traffic citation, or whether a claim was paid has absolutely no bearing on preventability. If there was anything the Driver could have done to avoid the incident or collision, then it was preventable.

A road crash or safety incident is not preventable when the vehicle was legally and properly parked, or when properly stopped by a law enforcement officer, a signal, stop sign, or traffic condition. If a stationary object is struck by a CRS vehicle, it is usually a preventable incident. If a driver rear ends another vehicle, it is usually preventable. It should be noted there are exceptions to any rule, but they are just that — exceptions!

It should be the objective of any person discussing or judging motor vehicle road crashes and road safety incidents to obtain as many facts as possible and to consider all conceivable conditions. Adverse weather, actions of other drivers, or other such excuses may well influence the judgment of preventability. If procedures, scheduling, dispatching or maintenance that is out of the control of the Driver were found to be factors, that should be taken into account. The Agency must take responsibility for the work environment we operate in, and recognize that Drivers cannot control some aspects. It is critical that Drivers have the ability to refuse to operate an unsafe vehicle without reprisal from management, and they be given the authority to resist pressures brought by passengers to break to rules of the road.

Professional Drivers are expected to operate vehicles in a manner which allows them to avoid potential incidents when they arise. Whether a Driver has a 25-year safe driving record or started driving yesterday has no bearing on whether a road safety incident was or was not preventable.

Taking a fair attitude does not mean leniency. If a road safety incident was judged non-preventable and the Driver knows it was preventable, the Drivers will over time lose respect for CRS vehicle use policies and procedures and the managers who implement them and ensure compliance.

**Questions to Consider**

When judging or discussing preventable road safety incidents, the following are some inquiries to make:

1. Does the Vehicle Accident Report indicate that the Driver is generally considerate of the rights of other road users, or is there evidence of poor driving habits which need to be changed?
2. Does the Report indicate good judgment? Such phrases as “I did not see,” “I didn’t expect” or “I thought” are signals indicating there may be a problem. An aware Driver should think, expect, see and quickly react to hazardous situations to avoid collisions.
3. Was the Driver under any physical or other handicap which could have contributed to the incident? Did the incident happen near the end of a long and/or hard run? Did the Driver get sufficient sleep before and during the trip? Is the Driver’s vision or hearing impaired? Were alcohol or drugs involved?
4. Did the Driver conduct and document a visual pre-drive inspection of the vehicle using the **Vehicle Daily Inspection Checklist**?
5. Was the vehicle possibly defective without the Driver’s knowledge? A gradual brake failure, a car which pulls to the left or right when the Driver applies the brakes, faulty windshield wipers, and similar issues are frankly excuses, and a Driver using them is trying to evade responsibility; s/he should have notified the VMU about the issue(s) prior to driving. Sudden brake failure, loss of steering, or a blowout may be considered defects beyond the driver’s knowledge of ability to control; however, the Daily Inspection and regular maintenance program should work to identify and prevent these hazards.
6. Would taking a route through less congested areas reduce the hazardous situations encountered?

**Specific Types of Road Crashes and Road Safety Incidents**

***Intersection Collisions***

Failure to yield the right-of-way, regardless of stop signs of lights, is preventable. The only exception to this rule is when the driver is properly proceeding through an intersection protected by lights or stop signs and the driver’s vehicle is stuck in the extreme rear, side or back by a 3rd party.

Regardless of stop signs, stop lights, or right-of-way, a safe driver should recognize that the right-of-way belongs to anyone who assumes it and should yield accordingly. In addition, a safe driver is expected to know the turning radius and operating conditions of the vehicle and be able to avoid making driving errors and damaging other vehicles. Intersection collisions are normally considered preventable.

1. Did the Driver approach the intersection at a safe speed for the prevailing conditions?
2. Was the Driver prepared to stop or yield before entering the intersection?
3. At a blind corner, did the Driver pull out slowly, ready to apply the brakes?
4. Did the Driver operate the vehicle correctly to keep for skidding?

***If the answer to any questions is NO, the driver was not driving defensibly and is responsible!***

***Rear-Enders (CRS hits a vehicle from behind)***

Hitting a vehicle from behind is almost always preventable. Whenever a vehicle is hit from behind it is virtually always considered the fault of the following vehicle, and never the fault of the lead vehicle. Drivers who hit a vehicle behind are generally: following too close (i.e., “tailgating”); not driving as per the conditions of the road (e.g., in rainy, icy or muddy conditions, more distance is required to come to a controlled stop); driving a vehicle with faulty brakes or worn tires; not paying attention to or looking away from the road; etc. It is almost impossible to find driving laws in any country in the world that excuses from culpability, for any reason, a driver who hits another vehicle from behind.

1. Did the CRS driver hit another vehicle from behind?

***If the answer is YES, the driver was not driving defensibly and is responsible!***

***Sideswi*p*es***

Sideswipes are generally preventable since Drivers should not get into a position where they can be forced into trouble. A Driver should pass another vehicle cautiously and pull back into the lane only when s/he can see the other vehicle in the rearview mirror. A Driver should not make any sudden moves that may force another vehicle to swerve. Unless the Driver is swerving to avoid another car or pedestrian, sideswiping a stationary object is preventable.

Drivers are expected to be able to gauge distances properly when leaving a parking place and enter traffic smoothly.

A Driver is expected, whenever possible, to anticipate the actions of oncoming vehicles. Sideswiping an oncoming vehicle is generally preventable.

The doors of a vehicle should not be opened when the vehicle is in motion and should not be opened on the traffic side when parked, unless clear of traffic.

A parked vehicle can be seen from a sufficient distance; therefore, the operator of an approaching vehicle should be prepared for and expect doors of the parked vehicle to open suddenly.

1. Did the Driver look to front and rear for approaching and overtaking traffic immediately before starting to pull away from the curb or merge into traffic?
2. Did the Driver signal before pulling away from the curb or merging into traffic?
3. Did the Driver look back (e.g., over the shoulder) rather than depend solely upon rearview mirrors?
4. Did the Driver start into traffic only when this action would not require traffic to change its speed or direction in order to avoid his/her vehicle?

***If the answer to any questions is NO, the driver was not driving defensibly and is responsible!***

***Skidding***

Skidding conditions are caused by rain, freezing rain, fog, snow or mud, all of which increase the hazard to travel. Oily road film, which builds up during a period of good weather, causes an especially treacherous condition during the first minutes of a rainfall. Mud can build up under tires, causing vehicles to lose traction and slide. Loss of traction on grades can be anticipated, and road crashes/road safety incidents caused by such factors are usually preventable. Chains or other suitable traction devices should be used, if they are available.

1. Was the Driver operating at a safe speed according to weather and road conditions?
2. During inclement weather, was the Driver keeping at least twice the safe following distance used for dry pavement?
3. Were all actions gradual?
4. Was the Driver anticipating ice on bridges, gutters, ruts, and near the curb?
5. Was the Driver alert for water, muddy conditions, ice or snow in shaded areas, loose gravel, sand, ruts, etc.?

***If the answer to any questions is NO, the driver was not driving defensibly and is responsible!***

***Pedestrian and Animal Collision***

Collisions with pedestrians, including those with pedestrians coming from between parked cars, are generally considered preventable. There are few instances where the actions of pedestrians is so unreasonable that the operator could not be expected to anticipate such an occurrence.

Collisions with animals are normally preventable, unless the movement on the part of an animal was unusual, abrupt and unexpected. This assumes the Driver was aware of animals in the vicinity.

1. Did the Driver drive through congested areas where it could reasonably be expected that pedestrians or animals would step in front of the vehicle?
2. Was the Driver prepared to stop?
3. Did the Driver maintain as much clearance between his/her vehicle and parked vehicles as safely permitted?
4. Did the Driver stop when other vehicles have stopped to allow pedestrians to cross?
5. Did the Driver wait for the green light or stop for the caution light?
6. Was the Driver aware of children and prepared to stop if one ran into the street?
7. Did the Driver give all pedestrians the right-of-way?
8. Did the Driver stop for a school bus which was stopped and properly signaling that passengers were loading or unloading?

***If the answer to any questions is NO, the driver was not driving defensibly and is responsible!***

***Parked or Stopped***

Incidents occurring when vehicles are properly and legally parked are considered non-preventable. Incidents occurring while the vehicle was illegally or double parked, or in a “No Parking “ zone, are preventable.

1. Was the vehicle parked on the proper side of the road?
2. Was it parked in a “risky” location?
3. Did the Driver park on the heavily-used or “blind” part of the highway (e.g., on a curve, on the back side of a hill)?
4. When required, did the Driver warn traffic with emergency warning devices (e.g., triangles)?
5. Did the Driver park parallel to the curb? Did s/he pull completely off the road?
6. Was the vehicle parked close to an alley or directly across from a driveway?

***If the answer to any questions is NO, the driver was not driving defensibly and is responsible!***