

DEFENSIVE DRIVER TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

1. PURPOSE

This Directive explains the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) policy, guidelines, and responsibilities for compliance with defensive driver training requirements addressed in the authority/reference.

2. BACKGROUND

APHIS, following the lead of other Federal Agencies, began promoting defensive driver training programs in 1981. Historical APHIS data suggests that following the implementation of this training, APHIS noticed a 40 percent reduction in the number of motor vehicle accidents within 3 years of inception.

3. AUTHORITY/REFERENCE

MRP Manual 5400, MRP Motor Vehicle Fleet Management Manual, Chapter 3.

4. POLICY

It is APHIS policy that all employees required to operate Government motor vehicles while on duty, or Government-provided vehicles while in travel status, receive defensive driver training, per the reference. The training source must be from a nationally recognized body such as the American Automobile Association, National Safety Council, etc., or State/local government agencies' driver improvement programs. The General Services Administration also sponsors an approved driver training course.

5. GUIDELINES

- a. The National APHIS Safety and Health Council has made the National Safety Council's 4-hour equivalent self-instructional video course available for employees through their Collateral Duty Safety and Health Officer (CDSHO) or a local Safety and Health Representative. This course is appropriate for employees not assigned their own vehicle for field work, seasonal/temporary employees, or for refresher training for all.

- b. Refresher training is required every 3 years. Supervisors, at their discretion, may direct employees to attend refresher training prior to the 3-year term as deemed appropriate, as a result of serious accidents, an increase in the number of accidents within their area of responsibility, or emergency program call out. At a minimum, the refresher training must be the equivalent of a 4-hour program. Participation in an 8-hour program in lieu of the 4-hour program is acceptable for refresher training.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. Supervisors will:
 - (1) Ensure that their employees satisfy the requirements of this Directive and the reference. Further responsibilities for supervisors are addressed in the reference for motor vehicle safety.
 - (2) Budget and plan for training needs of their respective employees.
- b. APHIS permanent employees whose duties require them to operate motor vehicles, and who have a vehicle assigned to them for field work, must complete an 8-hour or equivalent course, within 3 months of assignment. This course may be completed through physical attendance of an 8-hour training program, or if not readily available, self-instructional training methods such as compact disc or online methods. Completion of an 8-hour course or equivalent is highly encouraged for all other permanent employees.
- c. All other permanent employees who operate a motor vehicle during Government business will (at a minimum) complete attendance of a 4-hour or equivalent course, within 3 months of assignment. This course may be through physical attendance of a program, or completion of self-instructional courses using audiovisual, compact disc, or online technology.
- d. Seasonal/Temporary Employees (including cooperate employees) must complete a 4-hour program within 1 week of assignment to duties where they will be required to operate an Agency-provided motor vehicle. Audiovisual self-instructional programs will work best in these circumstances. These employees are not required to complete the training during each term if the training has been provided by the Agency within a 3-year period.

7. RECORDS OF TRAINING

Records of training course completion will be retained in Section 4, Chapter 3, of the reference. Employees should retain their course completion cards.

8. INQUIRIES

- a. Inquiries regarding the defensive driver program requirements should be directed to the Employee Services Division; Safety, Health, and Employee Wellness Branch, at 301-734-6116.
- b. This Directive is accessible on the Internet at www.aphis.usda.gov/library.

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