

**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 on the [APHIS](#) Administrative Issuances homepage.

/s/

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