**INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING A DRIVER IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

Hawaii Revised Statutes, §286-202.5 – Driver Improvement Program.

The statute requires all employers to provide a yearly driver improvement program to any employee who drives a vehicle with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) in excess of 10,000 pounds.

This statute applies to any individual or company that, 1) owns or rents a vehicle with a GVWR in excess of 10,000 pounds; and 2) an employee drives it as a part of his job – even if it is only a small part of his job.

The GVWR, sometimes referred to as the Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) is computed mathematically by the manufacturer and consists of the weight of the truck when it is empty (tare weight) plus the weight of a maximum possible load. The tare weight is what is used on your registration.

 The manufacturer’s GVWR is marked on a label located on the driver’s side of the vehicle either on the door hinge post, the door edge that meets the door latch post, or on the door latch post. They can similarly be marked on an information plate located elsewhere on the vehicle.

 This statute does not apply to: 1) vehicles with a GVW of 10,000 pounds or less; 2) vehicles registered in the personal names of people who do their own driving (owner/operator); or 3) vehicles which are driven by non-owners on a volunteer basis.

 The program that the statutes requires is easy and inexpensive to implement. The total time requirement for each driver will be about 10 hours per year. You are not required to hire anyone to do your evaluation or instruction for you. You can do it yourself or appoint one of your employees to do it. If you do not want to create your own program, you can send your drivers to another company that already has one or work out a joint program with another company or owner that will meet both of your needs.

 When submitting your program to the Motor Vehicle Safety Office for approval, you will need to use the Driver Improvement Program form attached. Notice that it is divided into three parts. For your program to be approved, it must have at least the minimum number of points listed for each of the three parts. Points are obtained by implementing any combination of the activities which have been assigned a point value.

 When filling out this form, briefly describe how you will conduct each chosen activity in the **Remarks** section – showing the amount of time that will be spent on each activity. In part one, for example, Behind the Wheel Evaluation – you might enter, “Drivers will be evaluated regarding their performance of a pre-trip inspection twice a year at 15 minutes per evaluation – 30 minutes per year; closed course performance evaluation – one hour per year; road testing – 30 minutes per year. A total of 2 hours per year.

 In part two, there is an 8-hour minimum per year requirement. This is generally met by the drivers attending an 8-hour Defensive Driving Course. However, if this is not desired, one or a combination of the other activities listed may be used. Again, show the amount of time spent in each activity. For example, you could schedule two hours of safe driving instruction using videos or online instructions, three hours of commentary decision driving and three hours of tail gate sessions. Make sure that the total hours meet the minimum 8-hour requirement.

 Two terms with which you may not be familiar are commentary decision driving and tail gate sessions. Commentary decision driving is a method of evaluating how a driver thinks as they are driving. To do this, the evaluator sits in the passenger seat, observes the traffic situations that come up, and listens to the driver give a verbal account of what they observe and their reasons for making various driving decisions and maneuvers. Tail gate sessions are discussions with drivers regarding any part of safe vehicle operations. For example, you may notice that your drivers are not conducting their pre-trip inspections properly. You could call all your drivers together to discuss and demonstrate the proper way to conduct a pre-trip inspection.

 Probably the easiest way of meeting the requirements for part three is to implement a safe driving contest and give a yearly award to the winner. A contest, for example, could consist of seeing which driver can go through the whole year without any accidents, violations, or breakdowns. Any driver who accomplishes this would then be given an award of some sort – a pair of driving gloves, a gift card for a restaurant, letter of commendation, or anything that you choose.

 You may already have a driver improvement program in place, but it is not documented. If this is the case, you will just need to complete the Driver Improvement Program form and submit it to our office for approval.

 You should submit your program outline for approval as soon as you finish planning your program. After you receive approval from the Motor Vehicle Safety Office, you will have the remainder of the year to implement your program.

 If this statute applies to your company, it is to your advantage to get your program approved as soon as possible or send in a letter stating that you will be participating in another company’s program or attending a driver improvement course. If one of your drivers is involved in an accident while you do not have an approved program or they have not attended a driver improvement course, it is like driving without an insurance, and the opens the possibility of unnecessary legal issues.

 To ensure compliance with the State law, HRS Section §286-202.5, the motor carrier safety officers monitor the driver improvement programs throughout the year.

 If you have any questions or need assistance in creating a program, please feel free to call (808)692-7661 and ask any Motor Carrier Safety Officer available.