

Simple Safety Measures Save Money & Serve Customers

The NATSO Foundation is the research, education and public outreach subsidiary of NATSO, Inc. The Foundation presents this article as part of its efforts to enhance the safety of the traveling public and the professional driver as they travel along the interstate system. This article appears in the Nov/Dec. Edition of Stop Watch Magazine.

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By Aimee Cirucci

What can truckstop owners and operators do right now to serve customers, save money, and build profits? The answer is easy – an increase in safety measures affects customers and employees alike, can increase profits, and promote the future viability of a travel plaza. Best of all, increasing truckstop safety doesn't have to be costly. As Jim Young, shareholder at Diversified Insurance Services explained, "Safety in a truckstop is far more related to a mindset than it is to capital expenditures." Increase travel plaza safety today with some fast and easy strategies from the professionals.

Make It Your Mission

Young suggested including the concept of safety in a truckstop's mission statement. Making safety a prominent part of the way a truckstop does business means that "everyone from the CEO on down pays attention to it," he explained, adding, "When management sets up safety systems, they can be very successful in reducing the frequency and severity of claims."

Outdoor Maintenance

According to Dave Heller, director of safety and policy at the Truckload Carriers Association and a member of the NATSO Foundation Board of Directors, "The most inexpensive thing a truckstop can do to increase its safety is simple maintenance." Heller recommended considering the following:

- Signage – Adding simple signage can stop guests from wandering into the path of traffic.
- Paint – Paint is inexpensive and effective. Use it to keep parking lanes fresh, cut down on accidents, and maximize space. Paint can also be used to bring attention to drops in a curb or sidewalk.
- Potholes – Keep your eyes open for potholes, cracks, and broken pavement and fill them promptly.
- Fences – Patching holes in fences around a truckstop can provide a deterrent to cargo thieves and other criminals.
- Lights – Rather than erecting new fixtures which can be costly, make sure every light has a working bulb in it.

Indoor Vigilance

Due to their extended hours and high foot traffic, truckstops must be attentive to avoid accidents inside the facility. Jim Young offered these tips to keep employees and guests safe in a travel plaza:

- Use floor tiles with plentiful joints and an anti-skid surface to stop potential slips and falls.
- In the kitchen where water is often present, use floor mats to keep employees clear of slippery surfaces.
- Regularly clean the exhaust hood and stack for the grill and deep fryer to prevent food contamination and flash fires leaping through the exhaust system.
- Provide wire mesh safety gloves for employees using professional grade meat slicers.
- Keep fire extinguishers available and visible, and train employees on their proper use.

Keep it Clean and Reap the Benefits

The experts agreed that cleanliness makes truckstops safer and more attractive to customers. Young stressed that cleanliness has two benefits. “It makes the facility more attractive and helps to ensure a non-slip environment,” he said. And Heller explained that “If you put customers in a first-class environment, they’ll treat it like a first-class environment,” and safety will increase. Taking steps to increase truckstop safety in easy and inexpensive ways benefits not only customers and employees, but the business as a whole.

Online Resources

Provided by Diversified Insurance Services

- EHS Freeware (options for training materials and information) - www.ehsfreeware.com
- Lab Safety Supply (fact sheets on safety and health) - www.labsafety.com
- MSDS Search (source for Material Safety Data Sheets) - www.msdssearch.com
- National Propane Gas Association (NPGA) - www.npga.org
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) - www.osha.gov
- ServSafe Program (food safety) - www.servsafe.com