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## Loss Control Services Publication

### Technical Bulletin

#### Evaluating Motor Vehicle Records

##### Introduction

Motor Vehicle Records (MVRs), which are maintained by the State that issues a driver a license, provide a means of verifying that a driver has a current license and his/her past history of operating violations and accidents. Obtaining and analyzing a driver's MVR should be a critical function in the initial selection and ongoing qualification of drivers.

Research has proven that MVRs can help predict the likelihood of future crash involvement. As reported in California's *Traffic Accident Risk Factors*, accident risk increases as a function of the number of accidents and citations on a driver's prior record. The data supporting the study was developed by analyzing the MVRs of over 200,000 California drivers over a 12-year period.

MVR evaluation not only helps to hire and retain a qualified driver, but it also reduces the risk that a company will be accused of negligent hiring in the event a driver should become involved in an accident. Care must be taken to assure that all new driving employees are evaluated with an assessment of their MVR; that none are inadvertently overlooked.

##### Analyzing MVRs

Unfortunately, there is no magic formula for analyzing MVRs that addresses the needs of all organizations. Certainly, any organization that operates motor vehicles would prefer to see a "clean" record (accident and violation free). However, organizations operating motor vehicles need to devise their own criteria to determine what an acceptable MVR is, what indicators should trigger disciplinary or driver training action, and what criteria should disqualify the driver from operating motor vehicles for the organization. For example, a speeding conviction for driving 25 mph in a 20 mph zone might hold much less relevance than being convicted of driving 80 mph in a 65 mph zone. In the same light, a "preventable accident" by a driver is more significant than just being a part of an accident that the driver had no control of. MVRs should be used not only for driver qualification, but also as an indicator that driver training would be beneficial. Training after a conviction helps a driver recognize the importance a company places on "safe" driving and helps reduce the likelihood of future, similar involvement.

That being said, there should be certain offenses that automatically disqualify an applicant, such as:

- any felony involving the use of a motor vehicle
- driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs (or refusal to be tested)
- leaving the scene of an accident

A copy of the driver's State Motor Vehicle Record should be obtained from each State where a driver holds a license, to ascertain that the applicant has a valid license and to review the driver's past record. An MVR also should be obtained periodically for each driver and reviewed to determine whether remedial training is necessary.

When reviewing an MVR, a popular method to make evaluation easier is to use a point system. If this method of evaluating MVRs is used, it should be applied to all drivers, without prejudice. Using it as a "sporadic" tool is almost as bad as not having the evaluation tool at all.



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##### Evaluation of a Driver's Motor Vehicle Record

To help evaluate a Motor Vehicle Record, the following "point system" can be used to highlight areas that need further action. Points should be assessed for each violation on the driver's MVR for the preceding three years. A total of 0-2 points requires no action; 3-5 points should result in supervisory review; 6+ points should require immediate supervisory action.

Very Serious Violations – Assign 6 points to each violation.

Violation	Points
A felony involving the use of a motor vehicle	
Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs (or refusal to be tested)	
Leaving the scene of an accident	
Reckless driving (resulting in an accident)	
Driving with a suspended license	
At-fault fatal accident	

Serious Violations – Assign 4 points to each violation.

Violation	Points
Speeding (15 mph or more above the posted speed limit)	
Reckless driving (not resulting in an accident)	
Driving too fast for conditions (resulting in an accident)	
Failing to obey a traffic control device	
Following the vehicle ahead too closely	
At-fault accident (no fatalities)	

Other Violations – Assign 2 points to each violation

Violation	Points
Speeding (less than 15 mph above the posted speed limit)	
Driving too fast for conditions (not resulting in an accident)	
Improper or erratic traffic lane changes	
Failure to yield right-of-way	
Operating an unregistered vehicle	

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