



Penske's Commitment To Driver Safety Starts With Smith System



With so many distractions on the road, it's essential that Penske Logistics' professional truck drivers stay safe.

The company, headquartered in Reading, Pennsylvania, relies on Smith System driver safety training to ensure that its more than 11,300 drivers have the skills and tools to handle whatever happens when they're behind the wheel.

"Every single driver that we hire gets trained in the Smith System," said Rob Helstrom, Director of Safety at Penske Logistics. "Our ability to have standardized training across the board, whether it's a new driver that comes on board in California or New York state – they're going to all receive training that's focused heavily on Smith System and The Smith5Keys®."

For over a decade, Penske has used Smith System training to prevent incidents and improve fuel economy for its industry-leading fleet. Penske

drivers have access to Smith System's E-Learning courses as well as behind-the-wheel and classroom instruction.

"One of the best services that Smith System has is the behind-the-wheel component because that really takes it out of the classroom and into the real world," Helstrom noted. "Making sure that those concepts are applied in a real-world setting, in a semi-controlled environment, with an instructor there coaching them and providing feedback is very beneficial."

Celebrating Decades of Driver Safety

Penske's strong safety culture is exemplified by the success of its drivers. The company recently welcomed 22 drivers into its 2020 and 2021 Diamond Classes, Penske's highest level of safety recognition. These drivers were recognized for achieving 20 consecutive years of incident- and injury-free driving.



"I've had the privilege to talk to some of our Diamond Class drivers," said Helstrom. "Smith System still to this day, even after all of their driving experience, helps them achieve those safety goals and stay focused on the roadways – both for work and at home."

Penske Diamond Class driver and Wall of Fame honoree Brett Coward echoes Helstrom's remarks. "Smith System training has helped me as a professional driver by seeing things from a different perspective," said Coward. "It's made me more aware of what's going on around me. I'm not overconfident because I realize things can change quite quickly. I'm more relaxed when I'm working. And at the end of the day, I'm not stressed when I come home from work."

Overall, the company's drivers are receptive and enthusiastic about Smith System training and how it helps them maintain safe driving habits behind the wheel.

"Drivers are saying they really enjoy the training," said Coward. "It's given them a nice standard procedure to follow. They realize that space is the biggest thing they need, and they're more comfortable driving when they have more visibility."

Long-Lasting Results

When it comes to their drivers, it is no question that safety is the top priority. However, Smith System training has helped Penske Logistics achieve many of the company's goals.

"Smith System training has helped Penske Logistics achieve several goals," said Helstrom. "First and foremost is our goal of establishing a strong safety culture. We want our team to know on day one when they come on board that we are fully committed to their safety."

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With Smith System training, Penske Logistics is able to reduce incidents and lower costs while implementing a standardized process for all of its professional drivers. Ultimately, this process allows the company to provide on-time deliveries for their customers' products professionally and safely.

"Penske's commitment to driver safety starts with the Smith System. It starts from day one," said Coward. "It's a great system. It's a standard procedure that works for everyone. I'm even trying to get my daughter-in-law to do the Smith System training so that she will be safer in her travels."

Helstrom agreed, "By providing those tools and resources to our drivers, we give them the opportunity to keep themselves and those around them safe and get home safe – each and every night."

