

Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers July 18, 2005

NETS Feature

Less Than a Month Away---Sign up Now

Don't miss out on an opportunity to attend the **Michigan NETS Traffic Safety Symposium** taking place on August 17, 2005 and sponsored by the Michigan NETS Advisory Board. The Symposium will take place at Steelcase Town Hall located in Grand Rapids. The Symposium will have nationally recognized speakers present on topics including: Risk Assessment and Negligent Entrustment; Defensive Driving Training Opportunities; Fleet Safety; Automotive Technologies and resources to enable you to implement traffic safety programs in your workplace. Internationally known, Dr. Jim Reese, will present the key note address on learning the necessary skills to overcome the effects of stress. On-line information including a registration form to attend this Symposium is now available at the following link: <http://www.michigan.gov/michnets/0,1607,7-188--120009--,00.html> For additional information please contact Dan Vartanian at (517) 333-5322 or e-mail: vartanid@michigan.gov

Leadership and Awareness to Promote Safety (LAPS)

The Race2Safety Foundation, an organization founded by former NASCAR race driver, Ernie Irvan was created to advance the cause of head protection equipment and technologies. The goals of Race2Safety include helping not only the over five million Americans who live with the effects of a traumatic brain injury, but to work to prevent similar injuries, especially among children, by developing next-generation head protection equipment. Beginning August 17, 2005, the foundation will be partnering with the Brain Injury Association of Michigan to take on the Michigan International Speedway track (on foot this time) for the inaugural LAPS Walk in support of those efforts. For more information please link to: www.race2safety.org

Highways Among The Most Dangerous Places For American Workers

Are your employees ready, set, and focused?

For many employees, the most dangerous part of the workday is the time they spend on the road. Of the top ten most dangerous jobs in the country, two involved employees on the road. The Bureau of Labor Statistics ranked driver-sales workers as the fifth most dangerous job, and truck drivers as the tenth most dangerous job. Research concludes that truck drivers die in traffic crashes six times more often than the national average.

.....more http://www.trafficsafety.org/newsletter/highways_071505feat.asp

Latest Traffic Safety News

Poll: Motorists Say Driving Getting Riskier, Admit To Engaging In Dangerous Behaviors

According to the third-annual Drive for Life poll, drivers in the United States find aggressive and distracted driving behaviors more aggravating than traffic delays, road construction, and personal stress combined. The recent poll, which surveyed 1,100 licensed drivers, revealed that drivers feel less safe and believe that they are more likely to be involved in a crash than five years ago. However, the poll also found that the same drivers admit to engaging in at least one distraction while driving, and

that distractions are likely to grow thanks to the influx of in-vehicle and wireless technologies. Read the release at http://www.safedrivingtest.com/press_releases/7-05driving.pdf

IIHS: Drivers Using Cell Phones Four Times As Likely To Crash

New research by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) says that drivers using cellular phones are four times as likely to get into a crash that can cause injuries serious enough to send them to the hospital. The Institute also said that using a hands-free device does not necessarily improve safety. Researchers concluded that male and female drivers faced the same risk factor, along with drivers who are older and younger than age 30. Read the release at http://www.iihs.org/news_releases/2005/pr071205.htm

New Traffic System Capable Of Predicting Gridlock

A new traffic system that can forecast traffic patterns seven days in advance will be launched in California this month. The new system will be used by a local broadcast affiliate and will provide viewers with 3D animations of their local road network showing current gridlock, as well as where traffic is likely to form. The system is called "Beat-the-Traffic" and it is the first of its kind to combine real-time traffic and speed with historical trends on major routes. Read the full article at <http://www.newscientist.com/article.ns?id=dn7605>

Technology, Event Data Recorders Join The Police Force

When it came to crash scene investigations, detectives used to rely on tape measures, rulers, special wheels, and graph paper. But thanks to lasers and computers, what was once a painstaking and time-consuming process can now be done in a matter of seconds. Police officers are now turning to event data recorders (EDRs) to uncover more evidence, a tool that has been used by their aviation counterparts. Considered a "treasure" to investigating officers, EDRs reveal the speed and braking throttle just moments before impact. However, perhaps most important, EDRs can provide the missing link in an investigation. Read the full article at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/07/02/AR2005070201032.html?sub=AR>

Annoying Check Engine Lights Could Be A Big Problem For States

For car owners, the appearance of the check engine light can cause fear and ultimately a trip to the mechanic. But in some instances even the most seasoned mechanic cannot figure out what the problem is. The check engine light sensor is connected to the powertrain control module, or the vehicle's electronic brain. It monitors everything from the transmission to the air and fuel mixture in the motor to vapors escaping from the gas tank. But more importantly, the light alerts us of a problem that can affect the vehicle's performance and increase its emissions, a big problem for states. States are currently under pressure from the federal government to inspect a car's diagnostic system, which triggers the engine light, to ensure automobiles aren't emitting too much exhaust. If states fail to comply, they can lose federal highway construction money. Read the full article at <http://www.nj.com/news/ledger/index.ssf?base/news-1/1120539136247010.xml&coll=1&thispage=1>

Ipod Craze Making Its Way Into Automobiles

As commutes across the country are growing longer and more people are spending more time behind the wheel, Ipods are joining the ranks of other in-vehicle technologies. With the purchase of an inexpensive FM transmitter, Ipods can send music or audio books to car stereos. Now automakers are negotiating deals with Apple Computer. Some automakers are even reconfiguring dashboards to display song information from iPods. Read the full article at <http://news.tbo.com/news/MGBC3T6JRAE.html>

CVSA Releases The Results Of Roadcheck 2005



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The Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance recently (CVSA) released the results of its 72-hour "Roadcheck 2005" truck and bus inspection effort and found that safety officials performed a record number of inspections. According to the Alliance, about 9,900 inspectors participated in the three-day event held June 7-9 at 1,348 locations throughout North America. Both vehicle and driver out-of-service rates fell for the first time in three years, from 23.9 percent in 2004 to 22.6 percent for vehicles. In addition, the group issued 30,202 CVSA decals to vehicles passing the inspection. For more information visit <http://www.cvsa.org/programs/04roadcheck2005.cfm>

Large Vehicles Show Improvement In Crash Tests

Five large family passenger vehicles and three large luxury models earned the top scores in frontal crash tests conducted by IIHS. However, no sport utility vehicle (SUV) made the top-rating cut. While

anti-rollover technology has significantly improved the safety of these vehicles, with so many older versions of SUVs on the road it may be years before we see a reduction in deaths. In the front crash test, vehicles strike a barrier on the driver's side at 40 m.p.h. Find out which make and model earned the Institute's highest ratings at http://www.iihs.org/news_releases/2005/pr061905.htm

Report Addresses Seat Belt Usage Among Commercial Motor Vehicle Drivers

The Transportation Research Board recently released "Commercial Truck and Bus Safety Synthesis Program (CTBSSP) Synthesis 8: Commercial Motor Vehicle Driver Safety Belt Usage," a new report that identifies and documents the motivating factors that influence commercial motor vehicle (CMV) drivers in deciding whether to wear safety belts. The report also includes research and practices that address CMV safety belt usage. It offers a review of ergonomic and human engineering factors in the design and use of safety belts in CMVs, as well as approaches to facilitate safety belt use by truck manufacturers. View the report at http://trb.org/publications/ctbssp/ctbssp_syn_8.pdf

NCSL Releases New Report On Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety

The National Council of State Legislatures (NCSL) has released a report summarizing state legislative activity on commercial motor vehicle safety in 2004 and 2005. The report provides background information about truck safety and tracks state efforts to comply with new federal CMV safety laws and regulations. View the report at <http://www.ncsl.org/print/transportation/cmV2004-2005.pdf>

Recent Fatality Spurs Tennessee Officials To Strengthen 'Move Over' Law

Yet another roadside death involving a police officer has officials in Tennessee reexamining the strength of its "move over" law. Under the current law, motorists are required to move at least one lane away from the emergency vehicle or to reduce speed before passing it. Failure to comply with the law results in a \$50 fine. In this case, the officer was standing beside his patrol car after stopping a motorist when he was struck and killed by tractor-trailer driver. Tennessee was the 30th state to establish a "move over" law. Read the full story at

<http://www.tennessean.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20050712/NEWS0201/507120357/1009/NEWS>

Driver Shortage Prompts Fleets To Raise Pay, Invest In Safety

Amid an ever-worsening labor shortage, trucking companies are facing new pressures to raise driver wages and invest in safety technology. The shortage also uncovers the need for companies to offer extensive training programs to retain employees and attract new ones. Flatbed and hazardous material haulers are among the hardest hit by the labor shortage. If not addressed, the overall lack of drivers could significantly impact and restrict the industry.

Report: Designated Driver Programs Fail To Limit Alcohol Impaired Driving

The U.S. Task Force on Community Preventive Services reports that campaigns promoting the use of designated drivers have a limited impact on the populations. The independent advisory panel analyzed



available research that measures the effectiveness of designated driver campaigns, and determined that these programs did not decrease alcohol impaired driving. One researcher said that in some cases the designated driver may be chosen based on who in the group is the least intoxicated. The study also addressed underage drinking and driving and found that while school programs do convince children not to ride with intoxicated drivers, the incidence of teen drinking and driving has not diminished. Read the full article at <http://www.news-medical.net/?id=10221>

South Carolina Enacts Primary Seat Belt Law

After an unusual legislative process, South Carolina has become the latest state to adopt a primary seat belt law. Initially, the governor refused to sign or reject the legislation. However, the legislation officially became law after the deadline for his action passed. Safety advocates have been urging all

states with secondary laws to enact primary laws, citing various research that show significantly higher belt use rates in states with primary laws. Currently, 23 jurisdictions have primary laws and the remaining states have secondary laws. Meanwhile, New Hampshire continues to be the only state with no seat belt law, except for children under age 18.

Americans Show Interest In Traffic, Weather Text Message Alerts

Despite a recent surge in high-tech wireless technologies, less than 10 percent of U.S. cell phone users have any interest in watching TV from their handsets. Yet, 20 percent are interested in receiving traffic and weather reports via text message, rather than by video. The findings come from research house, TNS Telecoms. Read the full article at <http://www.telecomweb.com/news/1121278012.htm>

News from USDOT

NHTSA Proposes Changes For Safer Backseats

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) recently proposed redefining what constitutes a seat, citing safety problems that can arise when a third person squeezes into the rear seat of a vehicle with only two seat belts. NHTSA research has found that when three people cram into a backseat intended to seat and buckle two occupants, the two people in the outside seats are less likely to wear their seat belts. NHTSA suggests that automakers either add a lap and shoulder belt for the middle seat, or make the seat so uncomfortable a passenger cannot sit there. Depending on the option, the cost of the modification could range between \$12 million to \$42 million. The agency estimates that the extra seat belt could save five lives and prevent 41 serious injuries annually. Read the full article at <http://www.detnews.com/2005/autosinsider/0506/25/F01-226493.htm>

ASA, NHTSA Officials Discuss The Use Of Salvaged Airbags

Leaders from the Automotive Service Association (ASA) and NHTSA recently met in Washington, D.C. to discuss the usage of used and salvage airbags and the issue of airbag covers. According to NHTSA officials, there is no evidence to determine a trend among the use of salvaged and used bags, and furthermore, they have no way of determining the number of airbags that have been used or salvaged from a crash. NHTSA called on repairers to contact the agency when they observe occurrences of used or salvaged airbags. Read the full article at <http://www.abrn.com/abrn/article/articleDetail.jsp?id=167690>

FMCSA Launches New Website To Prevent Moving Fraud

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has announced the launch of ProtectYourMove.gov, a new website that arms consumers with the information they need to protect themselves against dishonest and rogue movers. The goal of the website is to increase public awareness about the moving industry and decrease moving fraud by providing consumers with the



NHTSA Launches Summer Mini-Planners To Curb Impaired Driving

The arrival of summer often brings with it a dangerous jump in the number of impaired driving crashes. In its efforts to reduce alcohol-involved traffic crashes during the summer months, NHTSA has developed a series of mini-planners. One of the mini-planners - "100 Deadly Days of Summer" - supports a summer-long push to remind everyone to always designate a sober driver any time they plan to drink alcohol. Another mini-planner is designed to address the growing and troubling trend of parents, either hosting or condoning, summer parties where alcohol is served to minors. This planner reminds parents that "Those Who Host Lose the Most." Each mini-planner contains template press

releases, drop-in articles, and poster art. The planners are available at <http://www.stopimpaireddriving.org/planners.htm>

2005 National Impaired Driving Crackdown: August 19-September 5

Preparations are in motion for the 2005 National Impaired Driving Crackdown. Under the theme, "You Drink & Drive. You Lose," the campaign will target 21-34 year old males—those at greatest risk of being involved in impaired driving crashes. This year, law enforcement officials will be reminded to look for impaired motorcycle riders. Motorcyclists are more likely than other motorists to drive with a positive BAC and alcohol is involved even more among riders age 30-49. To help law enforcement with this effort, NHTSA has recently published a brochure - "The Detection of DWI Motorcyclists" - that contains detection cues for impaired motorcycle operators. The enforcement crackdown period will take place during the two weeks leading up to the Labor Day weekend (August 19 - September 5). A timeline is now available at

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/alcohol/StopImpaired/2280LaborDayWeb/pages/index.htm>

Work-Life:

New Guide Addresses Underage Drinking, State Laws

The Century Council has recently released, "Underage Drinking: A Resource Guide to State Laws," a compilation of national statistics and state laws on underage drinking. The guide includes a survey of state laws against possession, purchasing, and consumption of alcohol by minors, as well as the penalties associated with using a false identification. For more information about the resource guide visit <http://www.centurycouncil.org/underage/aboutguide.html>

Study: High School Off Campus Lunches Fuel Teen Crashes

A recent study compared high schools in North Carolina with and without open-lunch policies and the rates of lunchtime motor vehicle crashes involving youth. Open-lunch policies allow teens to drive off-campus during lunchtime. It was determined that crash rates over the lunch hour period were significantly higher for teens with open-lunch policies and increased the number of vehicle occupants. Researchers then concluded that open-lunch policies do indeed contribute to teen motor vehicle crashes, as well as encourage the situation where there are multiple occupants per vehicle—a known risk factor for teen motor vehicle crashes.

Source: Journal of Adolescent Health Authors: L.M. Stone, C.W. Runyan

International Traffic Safety News:

UK Fleet: Ban Young Drivers From Powerful Cars



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A UK fleet supplier is proposing radical new measures to take responsibility for and protect their young and inexperienced drivers. One such proposal would ban this demographic from using powerful vehicles. Under current law, newly qualified motorcyclists are restricted to bikes with maximum 33bhp for two years, but there are no similar limitations for vehicle drivers.

The UK Turns To Spyware To Curb Speeding

The UK is exploring the use of surveillance and spy tactics to curb speeding. The new system involves fitting motor vehicles with a spy-like, satellite-based device that monitors the speed limit. If the driver exceeds the speed limit, the system automatically applies the brakes or cuts the accelerator. A government-funded study confirms that the devices promote safe driving. London drivers are expected to be among the first to use the devices and in doing so will receive a discount on their congestion charge. Read the full article at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2087-1678707,00.html>

The Search For 'Safety Champions' In The UK

UK Company directors will be asked to put their names forward as "fleet safety champions" to campaign for higher standards in the industry. The register of safety champions will be used as a high-profile example proving that creating a safe fleet pays dividends in the boardroom—lowering operating costs and improving company image. The proposal comes after a report by the UK Commission for Integrated Transport called on employers to become "sector champions."

UK Drivers Resort to 'Work Zone Rage,' 'Dirty Protests'

Fuming drivers in the UK are succumbing to "roadworks rage" (or work zone rage) after being stuck in traffic caused by roadwork. According to experts, the attacks are becoming increasingly dangerous. Workers at the UK's Highways Agency have reported plastic bottles full of urine being thrown at engineers by frustrated drivers. In similar cases, workers report drivers throwing glass bottles from their speeding vehicles. In some instances, the drivers even stop to argue with workers, holding them personally responsible for the delays. Still, other drivers are involved in "dirty protests" cleaning out their cars during delays and discarding their debris on the side of the road. Ultimately, these acts of aggression have caused even more delays. According to one engineer, lanes are often closed to clear debris thrown from cars.

Poor Roads, Worn Tires Are Deadly Combination For UK Drivers

Research in the UK has found that dilapidated roads and tires are a lethal combination on the roadway, and put company car drivers at significant risk for a crash. The results of a two-year survey by AA Motoring Trust and County Surveyors' Society found that one in six of Britain's principle roads failed basic skid resistance tests and that under wet conditions, tires on or above the legal tread depth limit increase crash-risk.