

Michigan NETStalk

Michigan Network of Employers For Traffic Safety

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DISTRACTED DRIVERS: WHO, ME?

In-Vehicle Telematics: Here by Consumer Demand

By Kathryn Lusby-Treber, Executive Director, NETS National

With in-vehicle telematics, motorists have the option of buying and selling stocks, checking account balances, making dinner reservations and receiving directions to the nearest ATM—all from their vehicle and with a push of a button. The term “telematics” is derived from blending the words telecommunications and informatics—the science of obtaining and transmitting information. Telematics describes location-based emergency, navigation, and information services.



People are more mobile today than ever before, as evidenced by the increasing number of hours spent in their cars. Men now spend an average of 84 minutes a day behind the wheel; women spend 64 minutes. As time-impooverished Americans spend more time on the go, the need for the vehicle to be connected to emergency services, to roadside assistance, and to information becomes more acute. According to a Meridien Research report, “for many the car is becoming the office, the second home, and the place to relax.”

A recent study by the Telematics Research Group indicated that automotive telematics is in the infancy stage and is at the beginning of an explosive growth cycle. According to Meridien, there is a growing demand for telematic devices, and while there are currently fewer than two million users of these services, market analysts predict that by the end of 2003, there will be more than 9 million users in more than 50 percent of all new cars.

But the real question is: How do motorists take advantage of the indisputable benefits of the added safety and security features offered by these telematic devices and refrain from the multi-tasking behaviors that so often lead to distracted driving? Most of these devices incorporate features such as voice recognition systems or hands-free equipment, but these features are no guarantee that the devices will be used in accordance with the safe driving practices that minimize distractions.

The consumer demand for these services is increasing with the recognition of their value as a safety and convenience feature. A

Driscoll-Wolfe Marketing survey indicated that 60 percent of current telematics customers give high satisfaction ratings to their service, making telematics a powerful tool in customer relationship management and a highly valued application on a wireless, Internet-based network that is expected to reconfigure motorists' lives. This technology will enable motorists to download information to their cars—maps, directions, a directory of restaurants in the vicinity of the moving vehicle—and to communicate between vehicles, office PC, home PC, a family member's cell phone, or a business colleague's personal digital assistant device.

With hectic schedules and the ever-increasing availability of automotive telematics, motorists can do many things in their cars besides drive. Often it's a combination of these varied activities that lead to distraction and result in a crash. With the advent of this new technology, drivers must become aware of the activities that are potentially distracting, and they must be taught strategies and techniques to manage and minimize them. It's time to be realistic and begin to train motorists on how to manage all the distractions at hand. Thirty-nine percent of the respondents in the NETS Distracted Driving Survey conducted last August reported engaging in distracted driving activities primarily while driving for work, making this venue the logical place to offer training on safe driving practices.

Michigan NETS Survey and the Need to Communicate Electronically

Recently Michigan NETS members received a letter indicating the need to update the membership listing. All members were asked to complete a short survey to continue their membership. If you do not recall receiving this letter and a request to complete a survey, please log onto www.michnets.org and click the menu item, “Membership

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NEWS

YOU CAN USE

- The National Transportation Safety Board is conducting an investigation into a fatal crash that occurred on Friday, February 1, 2002, on the Capital Beltway in Maryland. The investigation is the first in which the federal agency has singled out the use of a cell phone as a possible factor. The driver of a Ford Explorer was on her cell phone when the crash occurred. She lost control of the vehicle, jumped a guardrail and landed on top of a Ford Windstar. The driver of the Explorer and the driver and three occupants of the Windstar died in the crash.
- Planning a Road Trip? Your first stop should be the *National Traffic and Road Closure Information* website and your second stop should be the *Scenic Byways* website. These are interesting sites that include travel and road closure information by state as well as weather and traffic conditions, link to <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/>
- The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) recently released the 2000 edition of Highway Statistics, an annual publication that contains a wide range of information on the nation's roads and highway users. The report can be found on the agency's website at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/> and contains statistical data on motor fuel, motor vehicles, driver licensing, highway user taxation, state and local highway finance, highway mileage, etc.
- The White House is asking NHTSA to change its proposal for a tire pressure system in all vehicles, the Associated Press reported recently. NHTSA's proposal calls for monitors in each wheel that would alert drivers to low pressure, which hurts gas mileage and can lead to blowouts. After reviewing the plan, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) suggested NHTSA change the plan so automakers also would have the option of modifying the antilock braking system to measure tire pressure. Automakers favor the change because it's cheaper, but safety advocates say such a system isn't as accurate as one attached to each tire. Congress ordered NHTSA to devise a requirement for measuring tire pressure as part of the TREAD Act passed in August 2000.

Decreasing Drunk Driving Requires Strong Commitment, NCADD Says

In order to more effectively combat drunk driving, the National Commission Against Drunk Driving (NCADD) is calling for renewed political leadership, the use of high-tech devices by police and judges to catch and control drunk drivers, stricter enforcement of 21-year old drinking age laws, and dedicated funding from drunk driver fines.

NCADD recently released the main recommendations from its recent *National Town Hall Meeting on Drunk Driving in America*. Highway safety experts, law enforcement officials, judges, treatment specialists, and legislators attended the conference and compiled the recommendations.

Strong leadership is needed at national, state, and community levels and by private organizations, according to NCADD. The federal government should provide leadership, funding, research, evaluation, and technical assistance to the states, communities, and private organizations.

Communities should provide leadership and priority for drunk driving control. Citizen groups, private industry, and safety organizations should assist governments at all levels.

Good records and data are essential to operating the drunk driving system effectively and to monitoring performance. They should be accurate, up-to-date, and easily and quickly accessible by persons who need the information.

Among several other recommendations, meeting participants suggested:

- Courts should assess drunk driving offenders for alcohol addiction and require treatment when needed
- Hospitals should consider brief interventions to educate injured drunk drivers
- Judges should consider requiring offenders to use alcohol ignition interlocks on their vehicles as a condition of probation
- Employer should help address any alcohol problems of their employee

According to NCADD, progress toward effectively addressing drunk driving depends on three key factors: 1) public priority with citizens demanding action, 2) leadership at all levels, and 3) commitment by everyone concerned.

For more information or a copy of the entire list of recommendations, visit the NCADD website, www.ncadd.com

As a result of tough laws being enacted in the State of Michigan, Michigan NETS developed a Repeat Offender Education Kit that is available free to Michigan employers. To receive a free kit, go to the website at www.michnets.org and click on the "laws have changed" icon and follow the online instructions.

NCADD

National Commission Against Drunk Driving

Teen Employees Driving—Know the Laws and Rules

For adolescents, employment can be a valuable experience. In addition to its financial benefits, work gives adolescents the opportunity to learn important job skills, explore future careers and, in some cases, enhance their academic education.

But employment can also have negative consequences for young workers. Far too often, working teens suffer injuries that can have devastating effects on their physical well being. Working in hazardous conditions or too many hours can jeopardize an adolescent's academic and social development.

In 1996, approximately 42 percent of 16- and 17-year-old teens were in the labor force at any single time. An estimated 80 percent of youth are employed at some point before they leave high school.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) estimates that in the United States, 2,000,000 teens aged 14 to 17 are injured on the job every year and between 60 and 70 adolescents die from work-related injuries. Hundreds more are hospitalized and tens of thousands require treatment in hospital emergency rooms.

Unfortunately, many of these teenagers are killed or seriously injured while working in tasks or jobs prohibited by child labor laws, such as operating a motor vehicle. In fact for male teenagers, motor vehicle related incidents are the leading cause of death in the workplace.

Most employers in Michigan are covered by both federal and state laws regarding child labor. When both laws apply the more stringent standard must be observed. In the case of driving, the federal standard is stricter for 16-year-olds because it totally prohibits them from operating a motor vehicle on public roadways and 17-year-olds can only operate a motor vehicle on an incidental or occasional basis and are limited by other specific criteria as well.

Federal Restrictions

Employees under 17 years of age may not drive motor vehicles on public roads as part of their jobs. Seventeen-year-olds may drive cars and small trucks on public roadways as part of their employment, but ONLY if all of the following requirements are met:

- Driving is limited to daylight hours.
- The 17-year-old holds a state license valid for the type of driving involved in the job performed.
- The 17-year-old has successfully completed a state-approved driver education course and has no records of any moving violation at the time of hire.
- The automobile or truck is equipped with a seat belt for the driver and any passengers and the employer has instructed the youth that the seat belts must be used when driving the vehicle.
- The automobile or truck does not exceed 6,000 pounds gross vehicle weight.

The driving may not involve:

- Towing vehicles
- Route deliveries or route sales
- Transportation for hire of property, goods, or passengers



- Urgent, time-sensitive deliveries (such as pizza deliveries)
- Transporting more than three passengers, including employees of the employer
- Driving beyond a 30-mile radius from the youth's place of employment
- More than two trips away from the primary place of employment in any single day to deliver the employer's goods to a customer (other than urgent, time-sensitive deliveries which are prohibited)
- More than two trips away from the primary place of employment in any single day to transport passengers, other than employees of the employer
- Such driving is occasional and incidental to the 17-year-old's employment. This means that the youth may spend no more than one-third of the work time in any workday and no more than 20 percent of the work time in any workweek driving.

The above requirements apply whether the youth is driving a personal or employee owned vehicle. For further information, contact the United States Department of Labor Wage and Hour Office in Detroit at (313) 226-7447 or Grand Rapids at (616) 456-2004, or visit their website at <http://www.dol.gov>. The Michigan Department of Consumer and Industry Services Wage and Hour Division can also provide information. They can be reached by calling (517) 322-1825 or visiting their website at <http://www.cis.state.mi.us/bsr/divisions/wb/bome.htm>.

As an employer, there are a number of things to ensure the safety of employees under 18 years of age. Employers should obtain documentation from 17-year-old employees who drive as part of their job. Such documentation would include evidence of the employee's age, completion of a driver education course, clean driving record, and appropriate state driver's license. Employers should provide sufficient training for the minors and let them know what is expected from them. Be sure that teens know where to find and how to use any safety equipment. Tell teens what to do if an injury occurs. Have a first aid kit available and have them report unsafe conditions immediately.

Parents can also help by talking to their teens about their jobs. Be aware of the types of things they are doing and ensure that they are adequately supervised. Stop in and observe the conditions of your teen's work place. Ask teachers or school administrators to let you know if there are problems with attendance or performance at school. Have the teen keep a record of the days and hours worked, including starting and ending times. Make certain that the teen is not left alone, especially after dark when there are cash transactions involved.

It really is a community effort; parents, employers, educators, and government agencies all have an important role in keeping youths safe and healthy on the job.

*Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Public Health Service
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
"Promoting Safe Work for Young Workers"
Publication No. 99-141*





Office of Highway Safety Planning
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 Department of State Police
 Office of Highway Safety Planning
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Free materials available at the Michigan Resource Center

We're cleaning house! The Office of Highway Safety Planning is making room for new traffic safety materials at the Michigan Resource Center. As a result, we're making available on a first-come, first-served basis items that will be discontinued. No quantity limits! But when they're gone, they're gone.

If you haven't had a chance to visit this new website, please log on and spend some time reviewing the many resources available—you'll be amazed at the resources that are available to you for the asking.

Items to be discontinued:

Topic	Item Name	Inventory No.
Drunk driving	Designated driver posters	OHSP 106, 107
Drunk driving	Your keys please posters (two different pictures)	OHSP 609, 610
Youth alcohol	Have, have not poster	OHSP 150
Youth alcohol	Just hold it a minute poster	OHSP 151
Aggressive driving	Road hog posters	OHSP 611
Child passenger safety	Air bag alert flyers	OHSP 882
Graduated driver licensing	Be hip check stuffers	OHSP 952
Graduated driver licensing	Be hip brochures	OHSP 951

The following new items are available:

Topic	Item Name	Inventory No.
Drunk driving	Drunk Driving & You	OHSP 105
Youth alcohol (Spanish)	Zero Tolerance Means Zero Chances Bookmark	OHSP 130S
Child passenger safety (Spanish)	Child passenger safety flyer	OHSP 969

For more information on each item, visit the Michigan Resource Center website at www.michiganresourcecenter.org. Fax your orders to the Michigan Resource Center (517) 882-7778 or simply order on line. Be sure to include a street address for shipping purposes.



Michigan NETS Survey

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Questionnaire." Please print a copy of the survey and complete information. The survey can be faxed to Dan Vartanian at the Office of Highway Safety Planning at (517) 333-5756 or mailed to P.O. Box 30633, Lansing, MI 48909-8133. It is imperative that the survey be completed and returned. **Any existing member who fails to complete and return the survey will be deleted from the database.** If you have any questions, please contact Dan at (517) 333-5322 or vartanid@michigan.gov

One of the recommendations of the strategic planning process was to convert the NETStalk newsletter to an electronic format. Currently all of the past newsletters are posted to the website www.michnets.org. Communicating is more efficient in an electronic format. Plans are to convert to an all electronic format in the very near future. It is therefore extremely important to have an e-mail address so we can continue sending you the NETStalk newsletter electronically. One of the questions on the survey requests an e-mail address.

