

## Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers November 17, 2003

### Michigan Safety Belt Enforcement Zones Expanded - Statewide Buckle Up or Pay Up Campaign Begins Today

Following a successful pilot program last summer, safety belt enforcement zones are being rolled out in 13 new locations, expanding the effort from eight to 20 counties as Michigan launches its latest *Buckle Up or Pay Up, Click It or Ticket* mobilization. Together, the 20 counties plan to conduct approximately 217 zones over a two week period. Safety belt enforcement zones will be strategically located in populous areas where crash problems are prevalent or belt use is low. A day-to-day listing of enforcement zones as well as results will be posted at [www.michigan.gov/ohsp](http://www.michigan.gov/ohsp). (click on the Buckle Up or Pay Up logo) Today starts a two-week national safety belt mobilization that runs through Nov. 30. Nearly 500 Michigan law enforcement agencies at the local, county and state level will join thousands of agencies across the country who are making safety belt enforcement a priority. Michigan's mandatory safety belt law requires the driver and front seat passengers to be buckled up. Children under age 4 must be in an approved child safety seat. And, passengers up to and including age 15 must be buckled up, in front or rear seating positions.

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### Legislation Introduced in Michigan to Outlaw MIRT

Legislation was introduced in the Michigan State Senate on November 12, 2003 to outlaw the unauthorized sale and possession of devices that can change some traffic signals from red to green and toughen penalties for their improper use. Unlawful sale or purchase of such a device would be a felony punishable by up to two years in jail and a \$10,000 fine, while unlawful possession of a controller would be a misdemeanor punishable by up to 90 days in jail and a \$5,000 fine. **To view the bill, visit <http://www.michiganlegislature.org/documents/2003-2004/billintroduced/senate/pdf/2003-SIB-0842.pdf> or <http://www.michiganlegislature.org/documents/2003-2004/billintroduced/senate/pdf/2003-SIB-0843.pdf>.**

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### Traffic Safety News...

#### NIOSH Researching Work-Related Roadway Deaths

According to a recent report by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), employers, employees, and others can take practical measures to prevent work-related roadway deaths while research continues in areas that are critical for further progress. NIOSH Hazard Review: Work-Related Roadway Crashes -- Challenges and Opportunities for Prevention provides data, analysis, and recommendations for preventing the leading cause of job-related fatalities. According to NIOSH, employee deaths in roadway crashes increased by 18.7 percent from 1992 to 2000, totaling 11,952 over the nine-year period. **To view the report, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2003-119/pdfs/2003-119.pdf>.**

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#### Industry and Legal Experts Debate the Black Box Issue

Industry and legal experts will discuss the issues of privacy and intellectual property associated with data obtained from the black box or event data recorders. The issue of data ownership is controversial, with onboard data about how a vehicle is driven being downloaded without the knowledge or consent of the driver. According to the Society of Automotive Analysts (SAA) sponsors of the session, the



Debate" is on Wednesday, November 19th at the Westin Hotel in Southfield, Michigan. **For additional information, contact SAA headquarters at 800-704-0051.**

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## **UK Call to Action for Fleets with New Cell Phone Ban on the Way**

Fleet News this week launches a new campaign, PhoneSafe, as a call to action for fleets to prepare for the Government ban on the use of hand-held mobile phones while driving, effective December 1. According to latest research from the Association of British Drivers (ABD), 40% of motorists are still unaware that use of hand-held mobile while driving is to be banned. Other key findings of the research indicated that 17% of drivers questioned admitted to using a hand-held mobile while driving. A quarter of respondents who were aware of new legislation said it would not stop them from using a hand-held mobile while driving. And many drivers who are aware of the legislation are still confused over what hands-free options are legal.

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## **The New Wave of Vehicle Tracking on Its Way from Ireland**

A GPS device tracks vehicle location and can interpolate speed, acceleration, and deceleration by calculating changes in location over time. A microprocessor decides when a crash has occurred and sends a distress signal over a standard cellular link. **For the full article, visit <http://www.wirelessnewsfactor.com/perl/story/22654.html>.**

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## **Winterizing Vehicle**

Winter is almost here. Fleet executives need to be extra vigilant as winter approaches, says the Retail Motor Industry Federation (RMI), which has issued a guide to winter driving. It recommends a four-point safety check for fleets that includes checking fluid levels and tire pressures, preparing for an increase in accidents, being cautious to avoid incidents and monitoring driver speeds. **For a link to the guide, visit the RMI website at <http://www.rmif.co.uk/WSite.dll/Homepage#344>.**

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## **New Research in Relationship between Cell Phone Use and Driving**

The Institute of Transportation Engineers has a new research study that investigates the relationship between cellular phone use and traffic safety. Driving simulation tests were conducted to explore the effects of cellular phone use on driver's errors and traffic safety. These errors were used as a measure of driver distraction. The results show that the danger of being distracted does not end with the termination of a phone call and that there is no significant difference between using hands-free and hand held cellular phones. **To view the full study results, visit [http://cnniw.yellowbrix.com/pages/cnnmoney/Story.nsp?story\\_id=43551157&ID=cnnmoney&scategory=Business+and+Finance](http://cnniw.yellowbrix.com/pages/cnnmoney/Story.nsp?story_id=43551157&ID=cnnmoney&scategory=Business+and+Finance).**

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## **Special Training Course is Offered to Speeders in Lieu of Points**

Up to 9,000 UK company car drivers a year could opt to attend a special training course rather than face a fine and three points on their license after being caught speeding. So far, almost 800 a month are choosing education over penalty in a scheme run by Thames Valley Police in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. Three months after the launch of the Speed Awareness Scheme launched by the police force, 2,000 drivers a month, 38% of them fleet drivers, have opted for the workshop course run by driver training company DriveTech (UK). The aim of the course is to improve driving skills, attitude and behavior in order to enhance the safety of motorists and other road users.

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## **Controversy Continues About Red-Light Cameras**



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# road-wise workforce



Four years ago, Washington, D.C., began photographing the license plates of drivers who ran red lights. Red-light running in the city has dropped by 59 percent. However, there is still opposition against the use of this technology, even though the cameras are saving lives. **For the full article on**

**the controversy surrounding automated enforcement, visit the Governing Magazine website at <http://www.governing.com/archive/2003/nov/redlight.txt>.**

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## Tailgating Drivers Main Cause of Road Rage

Tailgating drivers are the main cause of road rage and stress, according to a survey by UK motoring assistance group Green Flag. The findings, taken from more than 2,000 motorists, were released in conjunction with Stress Awareness Day last week, with the motoring organization urging drivers to remain calm behind the wheel. Drivers staying in the middle lane, not indicating, speeding in built-up areas, cutting lanes and failing to give way to oncoming traffic are also high in the annoyance stakes. Green Flag spokesman Nigel Charlesworth said, "With daily pressures like the school run, getting to work on time and rushing to meetings, all in an ever-growing tide of traffic, motorists are regularly put under immense strain. Anxiety, tiredness, muscle tension and poor concentration are all symptoms of stress, none of which are conducive to safe driving. Actual road rage attacks are rare, but stress is common."

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## TRB Summarizes SAFETEA Research Provisions

The Transportation Research Board has summarized the research and technology provisions of the October 24, 2003, version of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee's draft reauthorization proposals, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act of 2003 (SAFETEA). **To view the summary, visit**

**<http://gulliver.trb.org/publications/admin/SAFETEAcomments.pdf>.**

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## FHWA Releases Latest Issue of Public Roads

The September-October 2003, issue of the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Public Roads magazine includes the following articles:

- State-of-the-Art Toll Road
- Getting Traffic Moving Again
- Fighting Fatigue
- A New Solution for an Old Problem
- Rumbling Toward Safety

**To view the magazine, visit <http://www.tfhr.gov/pubrds/03sep/index.htm>.**

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## A Driver Wastes One Week Every Year in Traffic

In a year's time, the average rush-hour driver wastes more than an entire work week sitting in traffic, about 51 hours to be exact, according to a transportation study conducted by the Texas Transportation Institute. The lost time adds up to \$69.5 billion in lost productivity and wasted gasoline. The only bright spot in the report is the finding that things could be worse. According to the study, use of public transportation, control signals on freeway entrance ramps, coordinating traffic lights, and other tools to improve traffic flow do make a difference. **To view the study, visit the 2003 Mobility Study at**

**<http://mobility.tamu.edu/ums/report/>.**

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## Health and Safety Hot Fleet Topic of 2003 in the UK

Health and safety is the hot fleet topic of 2003. Fleet News has dedicated many articles to the subject this year and the Government has indicated that it is looking for a high-profile court case to drive home its intentions. So that fleets are in no doubt about what is expected of them, the Health and Safety



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Executive has now published its "Driving at Work" booklet that sets out in easy-to-read language what steps should be taken. **This booklet can be viewed at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg382.pdf>.**

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## 90% of Vehicles Inspected during National Car Care Month Failed

Ninety percent of vehicles inspected during National Car Care Month failed one or more aspects of the inspection, which underscores the need for consumer education, according to the Car Care Council. The inspection lanes, conducted throughout the US by sponsoring local organizations and businesses, are part of the automotive aftermarket industry's ongoing public awareness campaign, "Be Car Care Aware."

- o 38% had low, overfull or dirty motor oil
- o 46% needed washer fluid
- o 25% had low or dirty power steering fluid
- o 22% had either low, overfull or burnt transmission fluid
- o 10% had low brake fluid.
- o 15% had low levels of coolant
- o 13% needed a coolant flush
- o 21% had front windshield wiper failures
- o 14% needed service on their rear wipers and/or washer fluid

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## Teens and Doctors are the First and Second Worst Drivers

According to data from Quality Planning Corporation, a San Francisco-based company that helps insurance companies rate driver risk, teens, doctors, attorneys, architects and real estate agents round out the top five most crash-prone occupations. **To view the list of the top 5 and bottom 5 worst occupation of drivers, visit [http://money.cnn.com/2003/10/30/pf/autos/bad\\_drivers/index.htm](http://money.cnn.com/2003/10/30/pf/autos/bad_drivers/index.htm).**

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## Fleets "Name and Shame" Risky Drivers

UK fleets have been encouraged to "name and shame" drivers who regularly rack up penalties and fines for parking and congestion charges in a bid to curb the spiraling cost burden they face. Such a move would force drivers into realizing the high levels of cost and administration involved, claims John Lewis, director general of the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA). He suggests two strategies fleets could adopt to combat the problem – either praising competent drivers or shaming those in the wrong.

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## Children: The Future of Car Retailers Advertisements

Joining a growing industry effort to get noticed by the next generation of new car and truck drivers amid a fiercely competitive sales environment, Ford Motor Co. recently sent out thousands of alphabet posters to preschools as part of a community service program. Each letter on the poster offers a recycling tip for kids, along with an underlying message that Ford cares about their future. Marketing officials say there's no doubt automakers want to influence kids, who in turn often influence the shopping preferences of parents. Beyond the classroom signage, Ford has a deal to use the lovable, floppy eared dog from Blue's Clues in advertisements. For more information on Ford's commitment to children, visit <http://www.fordvehicles.com/commitment/>. Ford is not the only company getting on the children's advertisement bandwagon, General Motors Corp. has secured licensing rights to market the \$279 Fisher Price Chevy Silverado Power Wheels pickup that kids ages 3 and up can drive. Toyota Motor Co. indirectly appeals to children, providing kid-friendly information about the environment or new technology in cars, but may expand its presence in the near future.



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## Traffic Safety News for our Families...

### Getting a Ticket Just Got Harder on Teens in Maryland

For teenage drivers in Maryland, getting a traffic ticket has just gotten more complicated. On top of the fines all motorists have to pay, teens will now have a Maryland state trooper calling their parents about their driving mishaps. Under a policy announced last week, troopers will contact parents whenever a 16- or 17-year-old driver is pulled over for a motor vehicle infraction - whether it's for speeding, not wearing a seat belt or being at fault in a crash. At the traffic stop, troopers will ask teens for their parents' names and contact information, which will be forwarded to duty officers who will try to call parents and inform them of the violation. If parents or guardians can't be reached within 24 hours, the barracks commander will send a letter, police said. As part of the notification policy, the barracks commander will track all motor vehicle collisions involving juveniles to help identify spots where troopers could increase enforcement.

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### NHTSA Posts Study of Child Pedestrian Fatalities

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) this week posted a study of child pedestrian fatalities on its web site. Among its findings, the Research Notes indicated that sport utility vehicles, pickups and vans fatally injured child pedestrians at a higher rate than did passenger cars during the period 1997 to 2001. **The full report can be found at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/pdf/nrd-30/NCSA/Rnotes/2003/809-640/index.html>.**