



Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers August 15, 2007

Michigan News

Still Time to Register and attend the 2007 Wake Up, Michigan! Symposium

On behalf of the many sponsors of the 2007 Wake Up, Michigan! Symposium, you are cordially invited to attend this landmark statewide conference and national discussion on drowsy driving issues taking place on Thursday, September 20, 2007 at Steelcase Town Hall in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The consequences of insufficient sleep can be costly. Find out what happens when your employees, fellow drivers, and law enforcement officers don't get enough zzzzz's. Sessions will focus on the importance of sleep, drowsy driving dangers, legal and legislative impact of drowsy driving, fatigue from an officer's point of view, and employer risks and return on investment.

The following link will provide you with a registration form and other valuable information regarding this Symposium:

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/michnets/Wake_Up_Michigan_Symposium_registration_form_201909_7.pdf

Latest Traffic Safety News

2007 Drive Safely to Work Week : Download Free Materials today and start planning your campaign!

Take Charge of YOUR Driving Behavior
Reduce YOUR Crash Risk

DRIVE SAFELY TO WORK WEEK

October 1-5, 2007

Avoid High-Risk Driving Mistakes

1. Being Inattentive
2. Following Too Closely
3. Traveling at Improper Speeds
4. Ignoring Traffic Signs & Signals
5. Backing Up Unsafely

Secure Loads Can Prevent Traffic Crashes

This time of year, thousands of college students around the country load up their vehicles with their belongings and dorm-life essentials and head back to school. Most are unaware of what can happen when a load is unsecured. Campaigns sponsored by several states, "Litter and it will hurt" and "No debris saves you and me" can increase motorists' awareness but these messages aren't highly publicized. Vehicle-related road debris (VRRD) deaths are estimated to cause over 25,000 crashes



per year, 81 to 90 fatalities, and countless injuries. All road users share in the responsibility of properly securing the cargo that their vehicle is carrying and in reporting unsecured loads being transported by other vehicles. Drivers are also reminded to maintain a safe following distance and to stay alert in order to avoid collisions with road debris. Maria Federici, who was horribly injured and blinded by a piece of furniture that fell off a trailer and pierced her car's windshield before striking her in the face, is using her voice now to help prevent other crashes caused by flying debris. Visit: <http://www.mariasmiracle.com/> to learn of and to support Maria's efforts. Visit: <http://www.aaafoundation.org/pdf/VRRD.pdf> for The Safety Impact of Vehicle-Related Road Crashes prepared by AAAFTS in 2004.

National Labor Day Enforcement Crackdown

Law enforcement will be out in force across the nation August 17 through the Labor Day weekend cracking down on drunk drivers as part of the Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest campaign.

The high visibility enforcement national crackdown sponsored by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration promotes a simple message to all drivers. No matter what you drive—a passenger car, pickup, sport utility vehicle or motorcycle—if we catch you driving impaired, we will arrest you. No exceptions. No excuses. Far too many people still don't understand that alcohol, drugs and driving just don't mix. For more information, visit www.StopImpairedDriving.org

Insurance Survey Shows Which Practices Contribute to Lower Injury Rates

In a study released in early August, Liberty Mutual announced the results of its workers' compensation trucker survey. The study found that the frequency of crash injuries decreased, but the cost percentage increased. Crashes account for more than 20 percent of incurred loss. Based on survey responses and a review of injury rates, Liberty Mutual identified six key actions of companies with lower injury rates. These companies select workers based on their ability to perform the job, set high performance expectations, measure performance frequently, provide feedback, use interventions to change risky behavior and adopt and enforce specific policies. Four out of five companies have a written safety belt policy, and those who enforce the policy had a 33 percent lower crash injury frequency rate than those that don't. Also, companies that provide technology for managers to verify drivers' available hours of service had a 37 percent lower crash injury frequency rate than those that don't.

Many Americans Text and Drive but Say it Should Be Banned

Even though 91 percent of Americans think texting while driving is as dangerous as drunk driving, 57 percent say they send messages on the road. According to the Harris Interactive survey for Pinger Inc., 66 percent of the adults surveyed who text and drive read text messages or e-mailing while driving. Men and women send text messages while driving at equal rates, but the young do more often. For more information, go to <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/20159184/> Source: Reuters, August 7, 2007

Truck Industry Group Asks Again for National Drug, Alcohol Database

The American Trucking Associations (ATA) is pushing Congress to authorize and fund a clearinghouse for commercial motor vehicle drivers' drug and alcohol testing results. The centralized clearinghouse would improve traffic safety by making employers aware of prospective drivers' positive test results and keep alcohol and drug abusers off the road. Five states have their own drug and alcohol clearinghouses, but the ATA has lobbied for a national one since the 1990s. "ATA and its members believe that state-based reporting efforts are a good first step, but the optimal solution is a national clearinghouse," President and CEO Bill Graves said.



Bumper Tests Show Low-Speed Crash Repairs High, Even for Luxury Cars

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) conducted new tests on vehicle bumpers and found they aren't very effective in reducing damage in low-speed crashes. Even bumpers on luxury cars couldn't stop the vehicles from sustaining \$5,000 to \$14,000 in repair costs. Bumpers are designed to absorb the energy of a low-speed crash before parts that are expensive to repair, such as fenders and hoods, are damaged. IIHS found that many car bumpers don't line up with each other in a crash, and the bars under bumper covers are often too small or flimsy to absorb energy. IIHS used four tests at 3 and 6 miles per hour to evaluate the bumpers. The Institute recommends three steps for automakers can take to reduce the repair costs in low-speed collisions: make bumper bars longer, make bumpers taller and don't mount bumpers too close to the body.

Safety Features Step Outside Vehicles

While in the past most vehicle-safety technologies have been inside the vehicle, the new generation of safety features could be part of a wireless network that allows cars to communicate with each other and the road. The national network is expected to roll out in the next 10 to 25 years. "This has the potential to give us a big leap in saving lives," the director of Chrysler's Vehicle Safety Office said. Cars will be able to warn each other about hazards on the road and even brake automatically if a driver is too distracted to react. To make the system work, older cars will need to be retrofitted to connect to the wireless network. Spending on in-vehicle electronics is expected to triple by 2011. Privacy issues and the cost of ensuring all makes and models speak the same language are a few concerns about the network, which would help improve safety and relieve congestion. The Connected Vehicle Proving Center, a testing lab, will open this fall in Ann Arbor, Mich. The goal of the lab will be to centralize efforts that exist at separate universities and to showcase the new technology. For more information, go to <http://www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=643996>

Source: Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, August 7, 2007

Florida Courts Rarely Send Repeat Driving Offenders to Jail

Almost 2 million Florida drivers have suspended or revoked licenses, but almost half of them still drive. Current laws rarely result in jail terms for repeat offenders, which is why a man with 14 license suspensions and multiple citations and reckless driving arrests was still driving when he shot a deputy in the head at a traffic stop. Florida has no minimum mandatory sentences or provisions to impound vehicles to keep repeat offenders from driving. Attempts to strengthen the laws never made it out of the Legislature the past two years because of implementation costs. It's less expensive to drive on a suspended license than pay the court costs and fines, so drivers will continue to do so unless motivated by the threat of a jail sentence. One criminal defense attorney said any new laws should differentiate between drivers whose licenses were suspended for dangerous driving and those who owe past fines. Source: South Florida Sun-Sentinel, August 10, 2007

Illinois Considers Changing Rule that Allows Officers To Take License for Speeding

Illinois, the only state that takes drivers' licenses when they're pulled over for speeding, is considering changing that policy. The Illinois Supreme Court set the rule in the 1960s, but the Council of Chief Judges has formed a committee to look into reversing it. Some experts say the rule is outdated in a day and age when people need a photo ID for run-of-the-mill tasks. "I think many years ago, it was like, well, if we take your driver's license you're more likely to come to court," says state Rep. Dennis Reboletti of Elmhurst. "I think we're a little bit behind the times. People are very reliant on driver's licenses." The biggest hurdle has been figuring how people will pay their fines if their licenses aren't confiscated. Once circuit court clerk thinks credit card machines should be installed in patrol cars so drivers can pay their tickets on the spot. The rule could be reversed in 12 to 18 months, provided the Illinois Supreme Court gives its blessing. Source: Chicago Daily Herald, August 1, 2007



Report Examines Best Practices for Creating Culture of Safety in CMV Drivers

The Role of Safety Culture in Preventing Commercial Motor Vehicle Crashes, a Commercial Truck and Bus Safety Synthesis Program from the Transportation Research Board, examines developing a culture of safety among commercial motor vehicle drivers. The report also explores best practices for increasing a safety culture. For more information, go to http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/ctbssp/ctbssp_syn_14.pdf

Hard Disk Drives Become More Popular in Cars for Navigation, Entertainment Needs

Because so many people are taking music and video players with them on the road, automakers are starting to adopt hard disk drives (HDDs). About 16.6 million HDDs will be shipped by 2013, almost five times the 3.5 million in 2006. Hard drives are the fastest-growing storing solution for vehicles. Embedded navigation systems usually use one of three storage formats: CD, DVD and HDD. DVDs are edging out CDs as the primary map storage format, but neither compares with the system performance and storage ability of HDDs. For more information, go to <http://staging.engineerlive.com/news/18473/hard-driving-car-infotainment.shtml> Source: Engineer

Canadians Growing Worried about Distracted Drivers

Canadians are more concerned about distracted drivers than they were six years ago, according to a poll by the Traffic Injury Research Foundation (TIRF). Forty percent thought distracted driving was a serious problem in 2001, but that number has risen to almost 70 percent. "While concern about cell phone use has remained steady over the years, concern about other distractions has dramatically increased," a TIRF research associate said. Almost 96 percent of Canadians believe there are more distracted drivers on the road than there were five years ago. Recent public information campaigns might have made drivers more aware of the issue. External distractions were found to pose a bigger threat to drivers than internal ones. Eighty percent of poll respondents said new drivers should not be allowed to use their cell phones while driving. For more information, go to http://www.trafficinjuryresearch.com/publications/PDF_publications/RSM2006_DistractedDriving_ENG.pdf

News from USDOT

Court Says Truckers Not Allowed To Drive 11 Straight Hours

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit has rejected a rule that would allow truckers to drive up to 11 consecutive hours. The court ruled that the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) did not adequately justify the additional hour. The FMCSA had tried previously to raise the number of hours a trucker can drive, but the appeals court also struck down that decision.

Officers Start Placing Non-English Speaking Drivers Out of Service

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has issued a guidance telling U.S. law enforcement officers to place out-of-service any commercial motor vehicle drivers who cannot understand, read or communicate in English. According to a Department of Transportation rule, truck drivers must be able to converse with the public, read highway signs and write on reports or records. The rule has been in effect since 1970 but was not considered an out-of-service violation until 2005, and even then drivers received only citations. Because the rule is effective immediately, companies that employ drivers who speak English as their second language should keep records that show the drivers are proficient in comprehending and communicating the language.



California Launches Truck Safety Campaign

The California Highway Patrol developed a public awareness campaign to warn drivers about the dangers of making unsafe lane changes and turns near commercial trucks. Part of the campaign includes free safety seminars at churches and schools, where officers will teach drivers how to make safe lane changes, be aware of truckers' blind spots and maintain proper following distance. Twenty teams of CHP officers will patrol high-risk freeways. The campaign ends Sept. 31.

Agency Plans to Find Out Whether Electronic Billboards Create Unsafe Distraction

The Federal Highway Administration will commission a study this fall to determine whether electronic message center billboards cause more crashes. The video billboards are popular because the message and graphics are easily changed, but critics say they pose a safety hazard.

Work-Home

Web Site Launches Series about Senior Driving

Because officials estimate that the senior driving population will be responsible for a quarter of fatal crashes by 2030, Edmunds.com released a six-part series called "What Should We Do about Grandma's Driving?" The articles provide guidance for families with aging drivers and explain how state traffic experts, health organizations and automakers are adjusting to meet the needs of senior drivers. "Families will appreciate learning that there are a lot of techniques and technologies that can be used to help seniors drive safer, longer," an Edmunds editor said.

New Week Devoted to Drowsy Driving Especially for Teens

Few teenagers and young adults know the signs of drowsy driving, which can be just as dangerous as drunk driving. The National Sleep Foundation is launching the first Drowsy Driving Prevention Week Nov. 5-11. The campaign will advocate for states to enact preventive measures. Only one in five adolescents gets the right amount of sleep a week, making them susceptible to drowsy driving.

International Traffic Safety News

Drivers on Rural Roads Need To Pay Extra Attention in Summer

The summer months are the worst for crashes on rural roads in the United Kingdom, so drivers should be especially careful during that time of year. Two-thirds of the UK's fatalities occur on country roads, but only 29 percent of drivers believe they are at risk on country lanes, according to studies from Autoglass. Wet weather also adds to the danger. "Our advice to fleet drivers is that even if you think you know the road ahead, you should watch your speed, beware of hazards, take extra care on bends and do not overtake unless you have a completely clear view of the road ahead," Autoglass' managing director said. Source: FleetNewsNet, July 31, 2007

Ten Tips Help Fleet Managers Improve Safety

To meet their duty-of-care obligations, fleet managers are advised to follow the "10 Essential Elements" of safety management. The elements cover four areas of fleet risk management: policy, driver safety, vehicle safety and journey planning. "This document is intended as a guide to ease the risk and protect against loss or injury," a motor risk manager said. The four points under management policy are: Assign a senior manager responsibility for managing driving, implement a safety policy that incorporates driving, record and act on risk assessment findings regarding driving and record and analyze and act on every incident involving a vehicle. Under the driver safety category, provide a handbook to every driver and ensure employees are vetted and assessed to make sure they are properly licensed and trained. For vehicle safety, make sure cars and trucks are chosen based on their



suitable performance for the task and have the necessary safety features. Regularly inspect and maintain them. When journey planning, check whether a trip is really necessary and schedule them to a realistic timetable.

Boards Not Helping Fleet Managers Meet Requirements

Fleet management firm CLM says board apathy contributes greatly to fleet managers not meeting their duty-of-care obligations. Senior executives are not concerned with cell phone use, driver license checks and employees who use their own vehicles for work. Lack of action on these issues frustrates many fleet managers. "Any impetus that exists for creating a genuine safety culture is very limited or non-existent at board level," said a business leader at a software firm. "They see it almost entirely as an exercise in meeting the most basic legal requirements." The news is worse for small fleets, as nearly 75 percent of them are not meeting their duty-of-care requirements.

Source: FleetNewsNet, August 9, 2007

Employers Can Promote Road Safety Week with New Poster

Brake, a road safety charity, is distributing posters urging fleet drivers to slow down as part of plans to promote Road Safety Week in November. The poster shows a distraught businessperson sitting next to a car splattered with blood. The campaign message "Let kids live—20's plenty around schools and homes," shows the partial focus on children. Since 2005, child traffic fatalities have risen 20 percent. Young pedestrian and cyclist deaths are up. Fleets can encourage their employees to slow down by working with local schools or running their own campaign for safer roads. For more information, visit www.roadsafetyweek.org Source: FleetNewsNet, August 9, 2007

Insurers Tailor Policies by Drivers' Use

Several insurers around the world are starting to offer pay-as-you-drive policies. Norwich Union fits its policy holders' cars with Global Positioning Satellite devices that record and transmit travel information to a data center, which calculates a monthly bill based on when and how far the car is driven. These telematics are changing the way people drive and the market for car insurance. Weekend and retired drivers can save a lot of money on their premiums. Some insurers found that young drivers are more likely to crash at night, so they offer a discount for daytime driving to keep them off the road when it's dark. Privacy concerns are one drawback to usage-based insurance, because insurers could start to gather more information about a driver's abilities instead of just time of day, location and roads traveled. For more information, go to http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,,22177788-36375,00.html?from=public_rss Source: The Australian, August 3, 2007

Motorists Rely on Navigation Devices instead of Maps in United Kingdom

More than a third of drivers in the United Kingdom cannot read a map, according to a survey for esure car insurance. A majority relies on navigation devices, and 16 percent do not even keep a map in the car. "This could potentially lead to dangerous scenarios where people are relying solely on technology which can break down," an esure representative said. Men and women showed equal ability to read maps, though men claimed to be better at it. For more information, go to <http://news.sky.com/skynews/article/0,,30100-1278701,00.html> Source: Sky News, August 6, 2007

Nissan Introduces Concept Car that Showcases Anti Drunk-Driving Technology

Nissan Motor Co. has developed a concept car with features designed to reduce drunk driving. An alcohol odor sensor that detects alcohol in the sweat of a palm is built into the transmission shift knob. If alcohol is detected above a pre-set level, the transmission automatically locks. The car's navigation system also issues a "drunk driving" voice alert. Other alcohol sensors are located in the driver's and passenger's seats and trigger voice and message alerts if alcohol is detected. A camera monitors a



driver's state of consciousness, and the navigation system issues warnings if the driver is found to be drowsy. The seat belt also tightens around the driver to get attention. The system sends warnings and tightens the belt if the car begins to drift out of the lane. Nissan has also begun testing in Japan an on-board breathalyzer system that will immobilize the vehicle if the driver has been drinking. For more information, go to <http://www.nissan-global.com/EN/NEWS/2007/STORY/070803-02-e.html>

Source: Nissan, August 3, 2007

Australian Company May Face Police Investigation for Monitoring Employees

Australian telecommunications fleet Telstra could be investigated by police after workers claim they were monitored by surveillance devices in their vehicles. A workplace rights advocate is concerned that some Telstra employees did not consent to the installation of GPS devices and that Telstra might have breached the Surveillance Device Act. The workers' union says Telstra threatened to fire employees based on what the monitors found in work vehicles. A Telstra spokesman said the company is cooperating with the investigation and that all claims are false.

Source: Fleet Central, August 7, 2007