



Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers June 19, 2007

Latest Traffic Safety News

Top Ten List Details Benefits of Safety Belts

The Missouri Department of Transportation has developed a list of top 10 reasons fleet drivers should buckle up.

#10: You can be sure you'll stay at the wheel and in control if you're properly restrained.

#9: The extra equipment in commercial vehicles can increase your chances of being injured if you're not buckled during a crash.

#8: It's the law (most everywhere in the United States).

#7: Buckling up can protect you from other drivers and save you from long-term disability.

#6: Safety belts keep you in a better position to be aware of everything around you.

#5: You're more likely to encounter drunk drivers at night, and a safety belt gives you an extra level of protection.

#4: A belt helps you maintain control of the vehicle to ensure defensive driving techniques.

#3: You're more likely to be killed or receive a spinal cord injury if you're ejected from the vehicle. Belts keep you strapped in.

#2: Buckling up reduces your chances of being killed or injured by up to 50 percent.

#1: Your family is counting on you. Save your life by wearing a safety belt.

IIHS Releases Issue about Crashworthiness of Convertibles

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) released its latest issue of the Status Report (Vol. 42, No. 6). The special issue of the magazine evaluates convertibles' crashworthiness. For more information, go to <http://www.iihs.org/sr/pdfs/sr4206.pdf>

Research Board Releases Report on Bus and Truck Safety

The Transportation Research Board has released its publication, "The Domain of Truck and Bus Safety Research." Transportation Research Circular E-C117 focuses on information about truck and bus safety research. It is designed to establish a base of knowledge and identify future activities. For more information, go to http://www.trb.org/news/blurbs_detail.asp?id=7733

Safety Board Makes Case for Mandatory Electronic Onboard Recorders on Trucks

To make sure truck drivers aren't on the road for more than 11 hours, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) wants to see mandatory electronic recorders on trucks. Currently the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration requires the recorders for chronic violators. About 5,000 people die a year from truck crashes—700 of those are truck drivers. NTSB Chairman Mark Rosenker said some of those crashes wouldn't have happened if drivers had complied with hours-of-service regulations. But many in the trucking industry say no evidence shows the recorders would drive down crashes, so the expense—about \$1,200 per recorder—is not necessary. Congress will consider NTSB's proposed regulations. For more information, go to <http://www.nts.gov/speeches/rosenker/mvr070501.htm>

Source: Testimony of Mark V. Rosenker before U.S. Senate Committees, May 1, 2007



Researchers Work on Driverless Vehicles

The Southwest Research Institute (SwRI) in San Antonio is launching its Southwest Safe Transport Initiative to develop an SUV that can navigate a test track without a driver. Most of the project's \$3.5 million budget will be used to equip a Ford Explorer with sensors and computer processors to gather information and guide the vehicle around the track. Researchers are jumping into the "no-driver" projects in part because the Pentagon wants a third of its vehicles to operate unmanned by 2015. These vehicles would be used to explore mines, clean up nuclear accidents and remove asbestos. Many of the advances can be translated into safety features for passenger vehicles in the future. SwRI is tailoring its project to federal programs that will allow vehicles to communicate with each other and the road via transmitters. For more information, go to

<http://www.mysanantonio.com/business/stories/MYSA053107.01E.hendricks.2f54214.html>

Source: San Antonio Express-News, May 30, 2007

Companies Can Influence Employees' Drinking at Work and at Home

University of Texas researchers surveyed more than 5,000 workers at Fortune 500 companies and found that employers who actively discourage drinking have fewer workers who drink on or off the job. Employees at companies that did the most to discourage the behavior were almost 70 percent less likely to drink on the job and 54 percent less likely to drink frequently than workers at firms with permissive attitudes. Workplace campaigns that tackle problem drinking can affect employees positively both at work and at home, according to the researchers.

Source: Occupational and Environmental Medicine, June 1, 2007

About a Third of Pedestrian Fatalities Involve Drunk Walkers

Everyone knows it's dangerous to drink and drive, but walking after drinking could have similar consequences. In 2005, 32 percent of the pedestrians killed had blood-alcohol concentrations (BAC) of .08 or higher, compared with 31 percent of drivers killed who had the same BACs, according to NHTSA. "It's a problem people don't talk about a lot, but it is an important problem," said a director at the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. "Generally, when there is a pedestrian death, there has been an error on the part of both the pedestrian and the driver." Nearly half of pedestrian fatalities happen between 8 p.m. and 4 a.m., when pedestrian traffic is at its lowest. People walking at night should be careful because visibility is low and more drunk drivers are out. Mothers Against Drunk Driving advises pedestrians and drivers alike to arrange for a safe way home before they start drinking. Source: Chicago Tribune, June 10, 2007

Drug Overdoses Partly to Blame for Higher Accident Death Rate

Accidental death rates are rising in the United States, despite a stable death rate for motor vehicle crashes and workplace incidents. Crashes are still the leading cause of injury-related death, but deaths from unintentional overdoses are on the rise. Older motorcycle riders and falls among the elderly also contribute to the overall accidental-death rate, which has risen 12 percent since 1992, according to the National Safety Council. All fatal and non-fatal injuries cost \$625.5 billion in 2005, and a person dies from an accident every 5 minutes. For more information, go to

http://www.nsc.org/news/injury_data.htm Source: National Safety Council, June 7, 2007

Washington State Prohibits Handheld Phones for Drivers

Washington drivers will not be able to talk on handheld phones while driving starting in July 2008. Governor Chris Gregoire also signed a bill that bans reading, typing, or texting while driving, except in emergencies. Drivers must be pulled over for another offense before they could be given a \$101 ticket for violating the ban. Washington will be the fifth state with a cell phone ban, which includes a provision that insurance companies won't receive notification of violations.



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States Anticipate Headaches When Implementing REAL ID Act

The REAL ID Act, which calls for higher security for driver's licenses, goes into effect next year, and states are bracing themselves for the technology problems, customer overload and expenses they expect to face. Under the law, everyone getting a new or renewed license will have to show up at their Department of Motor Vehicles office in person with original identity documents, which workers will have to verify. The requirements will more than double DMV offices' workloads, and states will spend \$11 billion over the next five years to implement the new system. States can opt out of REAL ID, but that decision might inconvenience residents, because they would not be able to use their driver's licenses to board planes. More than 30 states are considering bills to protest REAL ID. The first deadline to implement REAL ID is May 2008, and all participating states must be compliant by 2013. For more information, go to <http://www.governing.com/articles/6real.htm> . Source: Governing, June 2007

Law Enforcement Agencies Encourage Motorists to Report Dangerous Drivers

Police officers are not the only ones monitoring the roads for traffic violations. Thousands of drivers a month call state tip lines to report other motorists who are driving recklessly, drunk or with children who aren't buckled up. At least half of the states have phone, Internet and mail reporting systems and encourage drivers to call 911 to notify police of dangerous drivers. Some experts are concerned the tip lines could lead to false reports and divert officers from other crimes. Officers usually are sent out to confirm when a tip comes by phone; they send a warning letter to the offender if they receive word by e-mail or letter. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), aggressive driving causes \$40 billion as a result of crashes and leads to thousands of fatalities. For more information, go to http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2007-06-10-reckless-drivers_N.htm Source: USA Today, June 10, 2007

Driver Inattention

States Start to Outlaw Texting While Driving

Nine states have considered laws that would ban driving while text messaging this year, with Washington the first state to pass such a law. Critics were successful in shooting down the bills in five states when they pointed out the lack of data and that reckless driving laws should cover such behavior. The director of pop culture at Syracuse University thinks text messaging is so rampant because employees feel they need to be in touch at all times. Specific data about texting while driving will not be available for a few years, but existing research about driver inattention shows that not paying attention is the main cause of most crashes and near-crashes. "If a driver's eyes are away from the roadway for two seconds or more in a six-second window, their risk of being involved in a crash is two times higher than an alert driver," a researcher said. For more information, go to http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2007-06-11-dwt_N.htm . Source: USA Today, June 11, 2007

Work-Home

Insurer Unveils Parental Notification Program for Teen Drivers

"Teensurance," a new program from Safeco Insurance, notifies parents when their teen driver engages in risky behavior on the road. Parents can use the Internet and global-positioning satellites to track their teen's car at any time. For \$25 a month, parents will know when their young drivers speed, break curfew or drive outside of an approved range. An online survey helps parents identify their teen's weaknesses, and a contract keeps everyone on the same page. Safeco will only review the data for evaluation purposes to see if the program helps reduce crashes. About 19 teens die a day from traffic crashes, and the most dangerous time for teens is the first few months they drive alone, according to research. "If my daughter speeds, I get a phone call," one participant said. "I can check at any time on



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the Internet where she is. She is a good kid, and I want to keep her that way." For more information, go to http://www.usatoday.com/money/industries/insurance/2007-06-04-teen-insurance-usat_N.htm?csp=34 Source: USA Today, June 4, 2007

International Traffic Safety News

Manufacturers Should Put More Emphasis on Safety, UK Experts Say

Truck manufacturers are not going far enough to ensure drivers' safety, said delegates at a roundtable debate in the United Kingdom. One participant said trucks need a safety rating so operators can make informed decisions. A rating would also prompt truck makers to take safety into account. Safety belt warning lights still are not standard in trucks. Mercedes-Benz countered that the company has spent billions on safety systems such as electronic stability control, lane assist and active body control.

Source: Automotive Fleet, June 7, 2007

UK Vehicles Will Have Black Boxes in Next Few Years

Starting in 2010, all new cars in the United Kingdom will have black boxes that automatically call for help after a crash, but some groups think the technology could be used to spy on drivers' whereabouts. The devices would dial the emergency number if the vehicle flips or the airbag is activated. It would also send a text messages with location details and be able to link the driver to paramedics to give them more information. It is estimated the black boxes could save 2,500 lives a year across Europe by ensuring emergency services reach victims sooner. Opponents fear the devices could lead to tracking vehicles or charging "pay-as-you-drive" fees. For more information, go to http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/news/news.html?in_article_id=460422&in_page_id=1770

Source: Daily Mail, June 7, 2007

Employees Should Take Safety Precautions When Traveling with Their Children

Workplace traffic safety has been a concern for years, and now many fleets are looking out for their employees' families. At some point, workers with young families have probably traveled with their children in company cars. Employees should be reminded that children should ride for as long as possible in a rear-facing child safety seat, because they are more effective in protecting a child's neck and head in a crash. Once a child outgrows a safety seat, they should ride in a booster seat to avoid injuries caused by safety belts. Booster seats should be used until the child is at least 4'9".

Source: FleetNewsNet, June 11, 2007

Fleet Drivers Still Use Mobile Phones in the Car

About 70 percent of company car drivers use cell phones, and some of those still use them without headsets in violation of the Road Safety Act. Fleet and fuel management company Arval conducted the study of more than 730 business drivers. Arval's head of market analysis said it's important to question whether drivers are just deciding to ignore the law or if companies are pressuring workers to answer their phones while on the road. "Best practice for a company is to encourage drivers to take breaks, when they make a call and listen to messages," he said. Source: FleetNewsNet, June 11, 2007

University Issues Elderly Mobility Report

The Monash University Accident Research Centre released a new report about elderly mobility. The report examines how poor mobility affects quality of life and the relationships between aging, reduced mobility, health status and changing driving and travel patterns. For more information, go to <http://www.monash.edu.au/muarc/reports/muarc255.pdf>



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