



Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers June 2, 2008

Latest Traffic Safety News

Truckers Still Driver after Testing Positive for Drugs

Thousands of truckers who fail drug tests could still be on the road, according to a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report. Fewer than half of the approximately 85,000 truck drivers who test positive for drugs each year actually complete required treatment and follow-up testing, and the true number could be much higher. The report found some trucking companies don't conduct required drug tests and don't have much incentive to do so. Dishonest truckers can use fake IDs and chemicals in urine tests to bypass the system. If they're caught, they move on to another job; if they're caught there, they hop to another state. The GAO recommends that the USDOT speed up audits of trucking companies and that states suspend commercial licenses of drivers who fail drug tests. For more information, go to

http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/news/localnews/transportation/stories/052108dnmettrucking_3bb80d7.html Source: The Dallas Morning News, May 21, 2008

Juggling Multiple Responsibilities Leads to Distracted Driving

Three-quarters of the times Americans slam on the brakes, their minds were on something other than driving, according to a Nationwide Mutual Insurance survey. Nearly half of Americans think talking on the phone while driving is dangerous, but 81 percent of them do it. Most distracted driving cases occur because of the need to be connected at all times. Older drivers are more likely than teens to multitask, perhaps because they're juggling responsibilities or because some cell phone bans apply only to teens. Using Bluetooth or a hands-free set won't necessarily help, because it's the conversation that causes the distraction. For more information, go to http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/2008-05-18-distracted-drivers_N.htm Source: USA Today, May 18, 2008

Anniversary of Deadliest Drunk Driving Crash Reminds of Need for Better Measures

Twenty years ago 27 people died in the nation's deadliest drunk driving crash in Carrollton, Ky. On the week of the anniversary, National Transportation Safety Board Chairman Mark V. Rosenker called for better measures to reduce the number of hard core drinking drivers. "What's needed are more effective measures on the state level to help ensure that responsible drivers are not endangered by those who continue to drink and drive," Rosenker said. The Safety Board established a model program to address hard core drunk driving that consists of 11 elements. No state has all 11 elements, and Kentucky only has four. For more information, go to <http://www.nts.gov/Pressrel/2008/080512.html>

Source: NTSB Press Release, May 12, 2008

Arkansas to Train, Place Truck Drivers into Jobs

Arkansas is undertaking a pilot program to train eligible unemployed residents as truck drivers. Gov. Mike Beebe announced the Trucking Workforce Pilot Initiative, which aims to train 300 Arkansans for trucking jobs. Then they'll be placed with trucking companies. The training program will cost about \$1 million, and applicants will spend four to five weeks going from enrollment to placement. Entry-level salaries range from \$35,000 to \$50,000 a year. Source: World Truck Weekly, May 14, 2008



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Cars Dangerous Place to be During Tornadoes

During a weekend in May, more than a third of the people killed by a tornado in Oklahoma and Missouri died in cars, one of the most dangerous places to be in such weather. Some drivers try to outrun a tornado, but the best thing someone can do is find a strong structure, according to the National Weather Service. Overpasses are especially dangerous because wind can gather intensity as it passes through. Source: Automotive Fleet, May 15, 2008

Slowing Down Helps Gas Mileage, Survivability in Crash

Because aggressive driving can lower gas mileage and lead to more-severe crashes, the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) reminds drivers to slow down. For every 5 mph they drive above 60 mph, drivers pay approximately an extra \$0.20 per gallon for gas. Slowing down also increases the likelihood of surviving a crash. Out of the states GHSA informally polled, only Wisconsin noticed a trend of reduced speeds because of high gas prices. "Nationally, GHSA members report that we are not seeing any noticeable decreases in travel speeds by passenger vehicles," GHSA's chairman said. "However, given the extremely high gas prices and life-saving benefits of slowing down, we urge the public to ease off the accelerator." Source: GHSA News Release, May 13, 2008

Report: States Need to Enact More Traffic Safety Laws

According to a February report from the Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, not enough states have adopted lifesaving highway safety laws. More than 40,000 people died in crashes in 2006, and motorcyclist deaths climbed for the ninth year in a row. Thirty states need a comprehensive motorcycle helmet law, 24 states lack primary seat belt laws, and 12 lack booster seat laws. The report outlines 15 recommended laws, such as a graduated licensing system and more severe punishment for drunk drivers with high BACs. For a copy of the report, go to www.saferoads.org
Source: The Nation's Health, May 20, 2008

Some Drivers Would Fail License Test if Taken Today

If they had to take a written drivers exam today, 16.4 percent of drivers (or about 33 million licensed Americans) would fail. GMAC Insurance's National Drivers Test administered 20 actual questions taken from state exams. Kansas drivers came in first with an average score of 84 percent. New Jersey drivers were last with a score of 69.9 percent. The national average was 78.1, a slight improvement from last year. Most drivers had trouble with questions about yellow lights and proper following distance. To take the test or view results, go to <http://www.nationaldriverstest.com/>
Source: GMAC Press Release, May 22, 2008

More Travelers Plan to Use Public Transportation on Vacation

More vacationers will take public transportation this year than last, according to a survey from the American Public Transportation Association (APTA). About half of visitors to New York City say they plan to use subways or buses. Washington, D.C and Boston also rank high for projected public transportation use. "With soaring gas prices, the expense of parking your car or renting a vehicle, a growing number of travelers say they will use the local bus and train as the quickest way to save money while visiting major cities," APTA's president said. Reducing the cost of getting around the city was the top reason travelers said they'd use public transportation. For more information, go to http://www.apta.com/media/releases/080519_green_travel.cfm. Source: APTA News Release, May 19, 2008

Officials Emphasize Move Over Law

About three times a month, someone in North Carolina is injured or involved in a crash because a driver failed to move over. A former paramedic who lost his legs while responding to a call in 2003 took part in a special event at Lowe's Motor Speedway to stress the importance of the state's Move Over



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law. "If you see emergency personnel, whether it's with amber lights, red lights or blue lights, you should move over, or you should slow down to a speed where if you need to stop short, you can protect people," a AAA representative said. For more information, go to

http://news14.com/content/top_stories/595869/officials-urge-motorists-to-move-over/Default.aspx

Source: News 14 Carolina, May 19, 2008

Highway Bill Faces Obstacles

Lobbyists have renewed their push for federal highway funding, which they say is inadequate. Reauthorization of the nation's multi-year transportation bill could be trickier than last time, because of a new administration and environmental issues. Currently, not enough money is coming into the highway trust fund, and the only way to close the gap is to cut highway spending. High gas prices have discouraged consumption, thereby reducing gas taxes, and the economy has affected other funding sources. The money that is available doesn't stretch as far as it used to. The incoming administration probably won't focus on a transportation proposal until Spring 2009. For more information, go to

http://www.forbes.com/business/2008/05/21/washington-lobbying-transportation-biz-wash-cz_atg_0521beltway.html Source: Forbes, May 21, 2008

Highway Watch Program Ends without Federal Grant

The Department of Homeland Security recently gave an Alexandria, Va. firm a \$15.5 million trucking security grant. The award ends American Trucking Associations' (ATA) four-year-old Highway Watch program. This is the first year the grant was up for a competitive bid. The ATA said it was disappointed it was not selected. A research component of program evaluation will continue through the rest of the 2008 calendar year. For more information, go to

<http://www.ttnews.com/articles/basetemplate.aspx?storyid=19831> Source: Transport Topics, May 21, 2008

Scooters Becoming More Popular for Their Fuel Efficiency

Scooters have been getting a lot of press lately for their low gas mileage. The Honda Metropolitan scooter can go 40 miles an hour and get from 80 to 100 miles per gallon. The engine is small enough that drivers don't need a motorcycle license and can legally ride in the bike lane in Massachusetts. Parking is also a breeze, because it can be left on the sidewalk. Drivers can fill up every week and a half for less than \$3, but they must be mindful of their surroundings and other vehicles. Scooters that are more economically friendly will be coming out soon. For more information, go to

<http://features.csmonitor.com/environment/2008/05/21/gas-prices-accelerating-scooter-sales/>

Source: The Christian Science Monitor, May 21, 2008

Miami Tops Country in Road Rage, Survey Finds

Miami takes the crown as the road rage capital of America for the third year in a row. Boston and New York follow close behind, according to the "In the Driver's Seat Road Rage Survey," commissioned by the AutoVantage auto club. The most courteous city in the survey is Pittsburgh. Respondents identified drivers talking on cell phones, eating, drinking, texting and e-mailing as road rage triggers for 2008.

They identified road rage as angry or upset drivers who engage in aggressive or bad driving. Eighty-eight percent see people talking on their cell phones every day. Major road rage causes are being in a hurry, running late, being impatient and speeding. Fleet managers can gauge their drivers' road rage by taking an online survey at www.gaugemyrage.com. For more information, go to

<https://www.autovantage.com/global/scripts/promo.asp?ref=avAUTVANonlgs01>

Drivers Polled about Cell Phone Use before Bans Take Effect

Licensed drivers in California and Washington are supportive of their states' upcoming hands-free law, but a survey shows the law won't change drivers' cell phone use. Respondents also showed they were confused about when the laws take effect (July 1), cost of fines (\$20 in California and up to \$101 in



Washington) and what devices can be used to comply. About half said the reason they would buy a hands-free device is to obey the law and for safety. A little less than half already use some type of hands-free device. A quarter of drivers 34 or younger admitted to texting while driving. Sixty percent said they intend to use their cell phones as much as they do now when the laws go into effect.

Source: Business Fleet, May 29, 2008

South Carolina Leads Nation in Texting Drivers

South Carolina has the highest percentage (40 percent) of people who admit to texting while driving. Tennessee, Georgia, Maryland, Louisiana and Virginia aren't far behind. Vlingo, a company that can translate voice to text on a cell phone, commissioned the survey. Arizona is least likely to have texting drivers at 17 percent. Currently 38 states are considering bills that would regulate cell phone use behind the wheel. A South Carolina bill that would have clamped down on teen texters was sent back to committee and won't pass this year. For more information, go to

http://www.charleston.net/news/2008/may/25/state_leads_nation_texts_while_driving42148/

Source: The Post and Courier, Sunday, May 25, 2008

Advancing Technology

Standards Urged for Web Access in Vehicles

As more auto manufacturers start adding web applications in vehicles, telematics company ATX is working to make sure safety and security standards are in place. For example, drivers shouldn't be able to watch movies, but they should have the capability to download them for backseat passengers. The company also proposes a .car domain that would support Web pages created specifically for use in vehicles. In-car Web access is expected to be a draw for Generation Y and Millennials, who grew up with computers and the Internet. Text-to-speech technology could be used to read Web pages to drivers, and Web-based telematics would help with real-time traffic information. For more information, go to <http://blog.wired.com/cars/2008/05/gearing-up-for.html> Source: Wired, May 20, 2008

Advertisers Eager to Reach Drivers by Sponsoring New Tech Features

In the next few years, drivers will be able to find gas stations with the lowest price, pay bills, order movies and schedule hair appointments from their cars. But instead of paying for the service, most will be ad supported. "Nobody wants another bill," explained a speaker at Telematics Detroit 2008. New vehicles could have navigation systems that are supported through advertising listings tied to the map. Advertising revenue is needed to bring these services to the young people who want it most but can't afford to pay for it. Advertisers will be able to narrowly target their audience and also get feedback on whether drivers purchased their products. Consumers are willing to share this information, especially if they get a discount in return.

Camera Systems May Become Common Safety Features

Built-in cameras could become a common feature in vehicles. Backup cameras and a test system mounted in steering wheels that monitor drivers' eyes for distracted or drowsy driving already exist. A new Japanese eye-tracking system, EMR-9, is a new research tool that helps automakers track how a driver watches the road as they work to prevent crashes. Could the goggles become as commonplace as buckling seat belts? For more information, go to http://news.cnet.com/2300-11389_3-6240184-1.html?tag=nefd.riv Source: CNET News, May 23, 2008



Trucking Companies Go High-Tech to Make Trips More Efficient

Major carriers are starting to adopt new technologies to improve efficiency and safety while complying with federal and labor regulations. Most of the technologies have been in development for five to 10 years but are finally coming down enough in cost to become more widespread. Among them is GPS, which help track the location of trucks to plan their routes more efficiently. Monitoring systems gather information about engine conditions and antilock brakes, among others, and transmit that data back to headquarters. Event data recorders are used to detect hard braking or other bad driving habits and give drivers immediate feedback. Handheld computers use wifi technology and can give drivers directions in real time. Electronic driver logs help managers ensure that drivers are getting their mandated rest. Safety features, such as vehicle stability systems, forward collision warning, lane departure warning, adaptive cruise control and tire pressure monitoring systems abound. Carriers also are using radio frequency identity technology to electronically pay tolls and fuel charges. For more information, go to

http://www.computerworld.com/action/article.do?command=viewArticleBasic&articleId=9085018&intsrc=hm_ts_head Source: Computerworld, May 22, 2008

News from USDOT

Americans Drive Less This March

The Federal Highway Administration estimates that Americans drove fewer miles in March 2008 than in March 2007. Estimated vehicle miles traveled (VMT) fell 4.3 percent, the first time March travel decreased since 1979. Cumulative VMT has fallen by 17.3 billion miles since November 2006. Total VMT in 2006 was more than 3 trillion miles. Greenhouse gas emissions fell about 9 million metric tons for the first quarter of 2008. For more information, go to <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ohim/tvtw/tvtpage.htm>

Source: USDOT News Release, May 23, 2008

FMCSA Issues Warning about Side Effects of Anti-Smoking Drug

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration advised health care providers not to qualify anyone using the anti-smoking drug, Chantix for commercial motor vehicle licenses. The Pfizer drug has been linked to seizures, dizziness, heartbeat irregularity and more than 100 crashes. Pfizer said the findings are not inconsistent with side effects listed on the label.

International Traffic Safety News

Air Pollution Leads to Blood Clots, Study Finds

Breathing in traffic fumes over an extended period can increase the chances of suffering a deep vein thrombosis (DVT). An Italian study showed that the likelihood of having blood clots in the legs rose as the density of particulate matter increased. Particulates are found abundantly in the exhaust fumes of diesel vehicles and are small enough to penetrate deep into the lungs. Blood clots might be one of the reasons exposure to air pollution is linked to higher heart disease and stroke death rates. For more information, go to <http://ukpress.google.com/article/ALeqM5gBTzqkHGk7GwqxAEaLD4F8Rh89zQ>

Source: The Press Association, May 12, 2008

British Columbia Project Studies Heavy Truck Crashes

The Traffic Injury Research Foundation (TIRF) is starting a project to identify the causes of crashes involving heavy trucks in British Columbia. The research project will identify the magnitude and characteristics of truck crashes and compare them to crashes in other locations. TIRF will survey truck programs and policies around the world to identify best practices for future applications. The solutions



will help truckers, the trucking industry and public safety. TIRF will announce the research findings in Spring 2009. Source: TIRF e-Press Release, May 14, 2008

Survey Shows Drivers' Ignorance

Nearly half of drivers don't know how to drive a car, a quarter can't adjust tire pressure and a quarter don't know how to top off the oil. The British International Motor Show survey found that a third of motorists don't know where to find their car's dipstick and 25 percent can't tell the difference between the windshield washer and radiator cap. To get out of a ticket, 30 percent of the respondents will try to flirt with traffic wardens. Source: FleetNews, May 15, 2008

Working from Home One Way to Reduce Congestion, Emissions

The RAC Foundation suggests that employees who can should work from home to help reduce their carbon footprints. Working from home can reduce energy usage by up to 80 percent, and two-thirds of an employee's energy consumption is spent on commuting. "If everyone who was able to worked from home just one day a week, we would notice a big difference on our roads and our other already overloaded infrastructure," RAC Foundation's deputy director said. Source: FleetNews, May 15, 2008

UK Companies Rethinking Work-from-Home Policies

Company car fleets are changing the way they operate because of the introduction of carbon pricing and requests to stray from regular business hours. The average daily commute adds up to 29 days of wasted time a year. Overall, that's 1.1 billion wasted hours getting to and from work. Carbon pricing and carbon trading will put added pressures on companies to reduce emissions, and one way that can be achieved is through fewer work trips. Alternatives like telecommuting, teleconferencing and remote offices already exist and are effective. Almost 3.5 million people work from home in the U.K. Source: FleetNews, May 22, 2008

When Sleep-Deprived, Brains Switch between Normal Activity, Drops in Attention

Brain activity is different in sleep-deprived and well-rested people, according to a new study that appears in The Journal of Neuroscience. "The main finding is that the brain of the sleep-deprived individual is working normally sometimes, but intermittently suffers from something akin to power failure," said an expert unaffiliated with the study. Researchers from the Duke National University of Singapore Graduate Medical School used functional MRI to measure blood flow in participants both when they were kept awake and when they got a good night's sleep. Participants then completed a task that required visual attention. Those with the slowest responses showed different patterns in brain activity. The study shows the importance of preventing sleep deprivation in people who are driving at night, for example. Sleep-deprived workers might not know they're impaired.

Many UK Businesses Overlook Gray Fleet

Only 20 percent of medium-sized fleets monitor employees who choose cash-for-car programs, and 18 percent admit not having a risk management policy, according to an ING Car Lease survey. Overall, only 30 percent of businesses took account of private vehicles in their risk policies. "We are calling for a step change in culture where gray fleets are treated in the same way as company cars," said ING's head of risk management. Source: FleetNews, May 22, 2008

Proposal Would Mandate Safety Features in European Vehicles

A draft regulation presented to the European Commission seeks to mandate advanced safety features on all vehicles to reduce traffic fatalities in Europe. Heavy-duty vehicles would be fitted with emergency braking assistance and lane departure systems by October 2013. Tire pressure monitoring systems and electronic stability control would be required in all passenger cars by October 2012. The



proposal also calls for stricter rolling noise limits for tires. The main roadblock to wide ESC use is public awareness of the feature's benefits. The proposal's approval process will take about two years. For more information, go to <http://www.euractiv.com/en/transport/commission-plans-mandatory-car-safety-technologies/article-172568>. Source: EurActiv, May 23, 2008

Workshops to Help Parents Demonstrate Good Driving Habits

The United Kingdom's Road Safety Minister launched a series of workshops across England to educate parents about how to be good role models behind the wheel. More than half of parents admit to demonstrating poor road safety behavior in front of their children. "Simply telling our children about how to use our roads safely is not enough—parents must practice what they preach or their sons and daughters will slip into dangerous habits," Minister Jim Fitzpatrick said. The interactive workshops use giant props to help parents understand road safety through their children's perspective. Experts will offer parents advice about addressing traffic safety with their children.

Work-Home

Aging Boomers Change Vehicle, Road Design

All highway transportation players are preparing to accommodate for an influx of about 20 million Americans older than 65 from 2004 to 2020. Nissan developed an "aging suit" with stiff joints, a strap-on belly, poor balance and goggles that simulate poor eyesight for its designers. General Motors is including blind-spot monitoring and lane-departure warnings in some Cadillac models. Vision is one of the first things to go on older drivers, and infrared night vision could help. Other low-tech features like appropriate ride height, thicker steering wheels and clearly labeled dashboard knobs are also helpful for senior drivers. Straighter road curves and simpler intersections would make driving easier, as would clearer road signs. Intelligent roads and vehicles would help not only senior drivers, but also everyone else on the road. Public transportation will face higher demand, and seniors in rural areas could find themselves stranded. Some states are revising their policies about testing senior drivers and possible license revocation. For more information, go to http://www.businessweek.com/lifestyle/content/may2008/bw2008059_070594.htm?link_position=link2
7 Source: BusinessWeek, May 9, 2008

Smoking, Drowsy Driving Linked to Teen Crashes

Drowsy driving and smoking are the factors most likely to predict a crash among teens, according to a new study by the Center for Injury Research and Prevention at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Based on telephone survey data from around 500 young drivers, length of licensure was the only other factor associated with being in a crash. The results are published in the Journal of Accident Analysis and Prevention. The findings could be used to develop more customized interventions for young drivers. Source: NSF e-newsletter, May 2008

Video Contest Encourages Teens to Go Slow

California is launching a new initiative to reach teens through video. Teens are encouraged to submit a 15-second slow motion video highlighting why slower is better as part of Slow Mo Films' launch. ClearChannel Media is sponsoring the contest. Slow Mo is "a great way to showcase their creative abilities while promoting important safety messages," Caltrans' communication director said. The submission deadline is July 31, and the top 10 videos will be posted on SlowMoFilms.com for popular vote through August. Teens can win cash, a Nintendo Wii or Apple iPhones. For more information, go to <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/thehomerom/2008/05/go-slow.html>
Source: Los Angeles Times, May 2008



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Teens More Likely to Be Unbuckled at Night

About two-thirds of drivers and passengers ages 16 to 20 who were killed in crashes at night weren't buckled up. That figure falls to 57 percent during the day. Total seat belt use rose from 81 to 82 percent last year, and 12 states had rates of 90 percent or above. For more information, go to http://www.mercurynews.com/nationworld/ci_9319374 Source: The Associated Press