



Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers May 15, 2008

Latest Traffic Safety News

Bike Safety News

NETS' Launches a Bicycle Safety Resource Center for Employers during National Bike Month

Are You A Bicycle-Friendly Employer? Find out by visiting the site at www.trafficsafety.org

Bicycling is an age-old American activity enjoyed by children and adults—85 million adults and children ride their bikes every year—a half million employees bike to work in the United States. While biking is a lot of fun and a healthy transportation alternative, there are safety risks. Whether your employees bike for work, to and from work, or solely for recreational purposes, support your workforce, their families and your community by being a bicycle-friendly employer. The NETS Bicycle Safety Resource Center for Employers is an online source of information reviewed and compiled to raise awareness and advance bicycle safety through the workplace.

Cities Make Riding Easier for Bicyclists

As gas prices rise, Americans become overweight and claims of global warming abound, it's becoming popular to lower carbon footprints and ride a bicycle. Some mayors and city planners are taking it seriously by accommodating alternative modes of transportation. The Most Improved Cities for Cycling this year are Washington D.C., Louisville, Ky. and New York City. The best cities are Portland, Ore., Seattle, Chicago, San Francisco and Boulder, Colo. The Worst Cities for Cycling are Dallas, Memphis and Miami.

Bike Share Program Begins This Month in Nation's Capital

Washington, D.C. is launching the country's first bike-sharing service this month. Users of SmartBike D.C. will pay a \$40 annual membership to get access to a network of bikes locked in computerized racks around the city. Access cards will unlock the bikes. They can be used for up to three hours at a time and can be returned to any station. The program will start with 120 bikes at 10 stations but could expand to more than 1,000 bikes at 100 stations within a year. Clear Channel Outdoor Holdings runs the program and may begin advertising at stations in the future. SmartBike users are encouraged to wear helmets, but must bring their own. For more information, go to http://ap.google.com/article/ALeqM5gLuDFvsDBMA_oEG-8H4k7F7uNRAD90AE1G82

Source: The Associated Press, April 27, 2008

Bicyclists Come up with Creative Ways to Unblock Lanes

Despite miles of bike lanes, New York City bicyclists have to reclaim their designated lanes from drivers who ignore the rules and idle or park there. New York City added 300 miles of bicycle lanes, and drivers who block the lanes face a \$115 fine. One group of bicyclists took matters into their own hands and spray painted images in the lanes to remind drivers that they're designated for bikes. The Transportation Department responded to bicyclists' concerns by widening some lanes and painting buffer zones to separate vehicles from bikes. "We believe that a connected network of bicycle lanes throughout the city increases safety, comfort and mobility for cyclists," the transportation commissioner said. Other bicyclists have gotten creative by giving offending driver fake summonses and starting a Web site posting photos of vehicles blocking bike lanes.



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Bicycle Fleets Could Benefit Bottom Line

The United Kingdom has invested in encouraging residents to get on their bicycles for many reasons, and some fleets have considered adding bikes to the mix. In congested areas, a bike could be the fastest way to get around. Bicycles also can boost a company's green credentials, save on fuel and reduce maintenance costs, not to mention the health benefits associated with cycling. Bicycle delivery services can cut delivery time in half compared to vehicles, and bikes are much less expensive to maintain. Special safety guidelines need to be taken into consideration, such as helmet use, reflective clothing and mobile phone use. Source: FleetNews, May 12, 2008

Guide Helps States Reduce Bicycle Crashes

The Transportation Research Board released Guidance for Implementation of the AASHTO Strategic Highway Safety Plan: A Guide for Reducing Collisions Involving Bicycles. The guide will help states implement their plans to improve bicycle safety, one of 22 key highway safety emphasis areas. It includes a brief introduction, a general description of the problem, strategies/countermeasures to address the problem and a model implementation process. For more information, go to http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/nchrp/nchrp_rpt_500v18.pdf

Motorcycle Safety News

NETS Developing a Motorcycle Resource Center for Employers

With the resurgence in popularity of motorcycling in recent years, there has been an increase in motorcyclist deaths, more than doubling between the all-time low in 1997 and 2005. In 2006, 4,810 motorcyclists were killed, up 5.6 percent from the 4,553 motorcyclist fatalities in 2005. In addition, 88,000 motorcyclists were injured in traffic crashes in 2006. To promote rider safety, NETS is developing an online Motorcycle Safety Resource Center for Employers, similar to the Bicycle Center the organization launched earlier this month. The site will provide information and tools from various motorcycle safety and advocacy organizations to use in the workplace to raise awareness and advance motorcycle safety. To find out more information, visit <http://www.trafficsafety.org>

Partners Meet on the Hill to Kick off Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month

The Motorcycle Industry Council and other partners on Capitol Hill joined together to highlight motorcycle safety during Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month in May. The event called for responsible riding from motorcyclists and a willingness to share the road from vehicle drivers. Representatives from the Congressional Motorcycle Safety Caucus, a bipartisan group of Congress members committed to improving the safety of motorcyclists, participated in the event that kicks off the riding season for much of the country. They sponsored a House resolution that would highlight Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month. For more information, go to <http://www.earthtimes.org/articles/show/congressional-leaders-join-us-transportation,376328.shtml>

Helmet Use Stressed during Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month

During Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month, National Transportation Safety Board Chairman Mark V. Rosenker is reminding motorcyclists that helmets that comply with federal safety standards reduce injuries and save lives. Motorcycle fatalities have increased 127 percent since 1997. Approximately 41 percent of the 4,810 motorcyclists who died in crashes in 2006 were not wearing a helmet. Twenty states and the District of Columbia have universal helmet laws; 27 states have partial laws; and three states have no helmet law. The Safety Board recommends that all states have universal laws that require the use of helmets that meet safety standards. "Just like seat belts for passenger vehicle occupants, helmets are the number one defense against injury and death in the event of a motorcycle crash," Rosenker said. For more information, go to <http://www.nts.gov/Pressrel/2008/080502.html>

Source: NTSB press release, May 2, 2008

Consumers Drive Less or Cut Back in Other Areas to Compensate for High Gas Prices

Record gas prices are causing 66 percent of Americans to drive less and 76 percent to cut back in other areas of their budget. In a Cars.com survey, some consumers said they're willing to sacrifice vehicle size and power to



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increase fuel efficiency but they don't want to pay a lot more. More than 80 percent believe the government isn't doing enough to push fuel-efficiency standards and that manufacturers aren't doing enough to make more fuel-efficient vehicles. The increase in gas prices is prompting many consumers to seek alternative modes of transportation. For more information, go to <http://blogs.cars.com/kickingtires/2008/04/carscom-surve-1.html> Source: Cars.com, April 22, 2008

Report Explores U.S. Traffic Safety Culture

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety released its 2008 Traffic Safety Culture Index, which examines survey results designed to identify attitudes, opinions and experiences of Americans related to traffic safety. It explores information about future research, educational outreach and a potential dialogue on the United States' traffic safety culture. For more information, go to <http://www.aaafoundation.org/pdf/2008TSCIndexFinalReport.pdf>

Forbes Ranks Cities with Best, Worst Commutes

When Forbes reviewed the 75 largest metro areas in the United States and evaluated them on traffic delays, travel times and how commuters use existing infrastructure, Buffalo, N.Y., Salt Lake City and Milwaukee came out on top. Atlanta, Detroit and Miami were found to have commutes that ate up the most time and were the least reliable. Population plays an important role in an area's commute—typically, the more people, the more problems, but even in some cities that are losing people, traffic patterns aren't smooth. Distance also plays a part—some of the cities have difficult commutes because of sprawl. For more information, go to http://www.forbes.com/2008/04/24/cities-commute-fuel-forbeslife-cx_mw_0424realestate.html Source: Forbes, April 24, 2008

New Book Examines Blame for America's Driving Culture

Bruce Moeller, a behaviorist and president and CEO of DriveCam Inc., a global Driver Risk Management company published his second book, Driving Me Crazy. The book explores American driving culture and how vehicles have become lethal weapons that cause mass destruction on a daily basis. Moeller argues it's the driver's fault, not the vehicles'. For more information, go to www.DrivingMeCrazyStories.com

Updated Research Shows Unlicensed Drivers Still a Problem

More than 10 years after the AAA Foundation first studied the topic, drivers with invalid licenses, no licenses or unknown license status still are involved in one of every five fatal crashes. More than 8,000 drivers a year who are involved in crashes are unlicensed, resulting in the deaths of 8,800 people. Nearly 7,000 of these have had their licenses suspended or revoked at least once in the past three years. For more information, go to <http://www.aaafoundation.org/pdf/UnlicensedToKillResearchUpdate.pdf>

Digital Billboards Can Relay Important Information to Drivers but also Distract

At the same time digital billboards are drawing accolades for delivering real-time emergency information, critics say they're a potential traffic safety hazard for drivers. Digital billboards can be programmed to change images every 6 to 8 seconds, allowing multiple advertisers to use the same billboard and have new designs updated in hours. The billboards can display important public safety messages, such as Amber Alerts and "wanted" posters for fugitives. Concerns about size and brightness have some worried that drivers will be distracted, but studies are inconclusive. Only a small percentage of U.S. billboards are digital, but that number is expected to increase dramatically. Some community leaders are putting a moratorium on digital billboards until more research is done, but others are forging ahead. Common standards would be beneficial, and outdoor advertising agencies say they are willing to conform to standards regarding safety.

Source: Institute of Transportation Engineers, ITE Journal, May 5, 2008

New Database Tracks Distracted Driving Laws

The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) will launch a new database to monitor state activities regarding distracted driving. "Although lawmakers at the state, federal and local levels are examining a wide



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variety of issues relating to driver focus, the most common concern is the potential distraction caused by cell phones and other technologies in the car," NCSL observed. Many states have passed a range of laws relating to cell phone use in vehicles while driving, and about 80 percent of cell phone users admit to talking on their phones while driving.

9% of Americans Admit to Driving after Drinking

Nearly one in 11 people admitted to driving when they thought they were legally drunk in a survey conducted by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. About 2,500 adults were surveyed, and 9 percent said they had driven in the previous month when they thought their blood-alcohol content was 0.08 or above. "The only thing that really works on a nationwide level is changing the culture," said a professor who studies drunk driving among young people. "I think it's improving, but we still have a relaxed attitude toward drunken driving." Mothers Against Drunk Driving says the most effective way to combat that attitude is to mandate ignition interlocks for anyone convicted of drunk driving. The Governors Highway Safety Administration supports sobriety checkpoints as a deterrent that reduces fatalities by 10 to 20 percent. Source: USA Today, April 29, 2008

Officials to Inspect Commercial Vehicles during Roadcheck 2008

About 10,000 trained and certified officials will canvass North America from June 3 to 5 to prevent truck and bus crashes and save lives. Federal, state, provincial and local officers will conduct inspections around the clock for Roadcheck 2008. Inspectors will go through a 37-step procedure and give drivers education materials on safe driving. The Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance sponsors Roadcheck each year.

Foes of Georgia Bill Sign Scooby Doo up for Online Driving Class

Opponents of a Georgia bill that would let habitual traffic offenders take court-ordered classes online signed Scooby Doo up for a similar course in Florida. The cartoon dog passed. Driving Educators of Georgia urged Gov. Sonny Perdue to veto the legislative because they claim it would be easier for reckless drivers to get their licenses back. Currently Georgians can take online classes to obtain driver's licenses, but traffic violators cannot go online reduce points or reclaim suspended licenses. For more information, go to http://www.ajc.com/metro/content/metro/stories/2008/05/08/drivered_0508.html

Source: Atlanta Journal-Constitution, May 8, 2008

Quality of Driver Training Program More Important than Length, Study Finds

The time an entry-level driver spends in training does not affect driver safety performance, according to a new study by the American Transportation Research Institute. The study is among the first to examine the duration of new entrant driver training, the curriculum topic areas covered and the relative safety impact of each on safety performance. The research examined 16,500 new commercial drivers, about 30 percent of that population. The driver training report is available at www.atri-online.org Source: Automotive Fleet, May 8, 2008

Drivers Attempt to Save on Gas by Slowing Down

The average national price of a gallon of regular gas is expected to reach \$3.73 next month, and in response some drivers are slowing down to conserve fuel. Other drivers say their time is worth more than the money they would save by slowing down. Cars are most fuel efficient from 30 to 60 miles per hour; at 65 mph or higher, wind resistance makes engines work harder and use more gas. Higher gas prices have made some consumers change, but those changes are things like going online to find the cheapest gas or only filling the tank part way. The Governors Highway Safety Association says states have not noticed a significant change in drivers dropping their speeds, even though 2 to 3 percent reduction in demand could mean a 10 percent decrease in gas prices. Truckers, especially owner-operators, have been slowing down to save significantly on fuel each week. Alabama and Connecticut have considered lowering speed limits but haven't gained much ground. For more information, go to http://www.usatoday.com/money/industries/energy/2008-05-07-gas-saving-tips_N.htm

Source: The Associated Press, May 9, 2008



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Guide Helps Administrators Implement Transdermal Alcohol Monitoring Technology

The Traffic Injury Research Foundation released Continuous Transdermal Alcohol Monitoring: An Agency Administrator's Guide, the third in a series. Transdermal technology monitors alcohol consumption by measuring vaporous sweat and is being used in more than 40 states. The report's intent is to assist administrators who are implementing transdermal technology to supervise offenders with alcohol problems. It addresses implementation concerns and provides guidance on important issues. The report focuses on cultivating leadership and fostering agency support, organizing a preparatory field study and analyzing the costs and benefits. It is available for download at http://www.trafficinjuryresearch.com/publications/pub_details.cfm?intPubID=242

Source: TIRF Release, May 5, 2008

Advancing Technology

Integrated Vehicle Technology Systems on the Horizon

Telecommunications and computer technology have made many new vehicle advancements possible, but most operate as separate systems. Hughes Telematics is getting ready to roll out sophisticated all-in-one control systems that coordinate everything from music to navigation. The control box will include GPS, a cellular modem, a solid-state drive and enough processing power to handle it all. It could also make a reservation at a restaurant, monitor a car's diagnostics remotely and check emissions between service appointments. The Hughes system will use an in-dash LCD screen and voice-recognition software. The company doesn't expect to offer two-way communication until 2011 and hasn't yet decided on a live traffic service. For more information, go to <http://wheels.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/05/01/making-cars-smarter-greener-safer-and-better-listeners>

Source: The New York Times' Wheels blog, May 1, 2008

Florida Drivers May Be First to Test Real-World Smart Car, Road Systems

Tests are underway in Orlando for smart-car and smart-road systems that would help ease traffic jams and prevent multiple-car pileups. Vehicles would constantly transmit data on location, speed and functions while receiving similar signals from other cars and "traffic management centers" throughout the region. Vendors are developing ways to use dashboard screens and debit cards to pay tolls automatically, order meals at a restaurant and download movies passengers can watch in the back seat. The U.S. Department of Transportation put out a bid for proposal that could speed up the 2012 rollout of smart-car and smart-road devices. Orange County might become one of the first places to test drive a real system next year. Officials would need about 600 volunteers to agree to use special transponders. One concern is how to protect drivers' privacy, but Florida already has rules in place to keep drivers anonymous. For more information, go to http://www.orlandosentinel.com/business/orl-smartcars0608may07_0_7768969.story

Source: Orlando Sentinel, May 7, 2008

Concept Interior Features Fewer Buttons

Visteon and 3M stripped two production vehicles so they could make new interiors that feature new technologies from both suppliers. One was developed for North America and the other for Europe. The center panel on the North American concept is a primary focal point. When the driver's hand nears the panel, the buttons automatically illuminate. A top-down cascade design means that pressing one of the top row's buttons selects a specific mode, and then the buttons on the second row configure automatically to a set of options that match the mode. The user gets tactile, audible and visual confirmation that the button has been pushed. The demonstration vehicle has nearly 40 fewer buttons than traditional vehicle interiors. Another feature is an augmented-reality display, where some type of navigational cues could be overlaid onto the windshield to show the driver exactly where to go. Wireless charging for mobile devices also is a featured technology. For more information, go to <http://www.sae.org/automag/technewsletter/080506Tech/13.htm>

Source: Automotive Engineering International, May 6, 2008



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UMTRI's Project That Helps Drivers Avoid Crashes Approved for Phase II

The University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute (UMTRI) will receive Phase II funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation to test technologies that help car and truck drivers avoid crashes. The project is part of the Research and Innovative Technology Administrations' Intelligent Transportation Systems Technology program. UMTRI and partners are developing and testing a prototype called Integrated Vehicle-Based Safety System (IVBSS) that will warn drivers when they're about to leave the roadway, are in danger of colliding while changing lanes or are at risk of crashing into the vehicle ahead. It will gather information from inertial, video and radar sensors in addition to a global positioning system. IVBSS was designed and developed in Phase I and is a \$32.3 million program. Phase II will include a field test. For more information, go to

[http://www.mlive.com/newsflash/michigan/index.ssf?/base/business-](http://www.mlive.com/newsflash/michigan/index.ssf?/base/business-16/120966534943470.xml&storylist=michigannews)

[16/120966534943470.xml&storylist=michigannews](http://www.umtri.umich.edu/news.php?id=1948) or <http://www.umtri.umich.edu/news.php?id=1948>

Source: The Associated Press, May 1, 2008

News from USDOT

National Click It or Ticket Enforcement Mobilization Runs May 19th - June 1st

Seat belt checkpoints and other stepped-up law enforcement activities will be conducted during the Memorial Day holiday. Thousands of State and local law enforcement agencies will be out in force stopping and ticketing unbelted motorists. The goal of this aggressive national campaign is to get more drivers and passengers to buckle up every trip, every time to reduce highway fatalities and injuries. This year, there is a new emphasis on convincing more motorists to buckle up - day and night. The risk of being involved in a fatal crash is significantly greater at night as compared to the daytime. Research shows that fewer people wear their seat belts at night than during the day. For more information, please visit <http://www.nhtsa.gov>.

Transportation Secretary Peters Calls for New Model to Pay for Road Use

U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary E. Peters posted an entry about the proposed federal gas tax holiday on <http://fastlane.dot.gov>, the Department's new blog. In it, she writes about the proposals that would temporarily eliminate the federal 18.4 cents a gallon tax on fuel and how the funding for the U.S. highway system is outdated, inefficient and unpopular. Peters believes it is time to embrace a more efficient, clean and technology-based method to charging for road use instead of relying on a gas tax-based model. Increased efficiency also would help cut emissions.

Nearly 1 Million Truckers Could Undergo Testing for Sleep Apnea

Half of America's truckers are obese and may have to be tested for sleep apnea if the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) adopts the recommendation its Medical Review Board made last month. Diagnosed drivers would have to stop driving unless promptly treated and would have to prove they were complying with treatment. Drivers with obstructive sleep apnea are at 2.5 times greater risk of crashing than drivers without the disorder. If every driver with a body mass index of 30 has to be tested, 50 percent of the country's 2 million drivers would need sleep screening at sleep laboratories. That's why a higher BMI of 35 is expected to be adopted.

Five States Get Millions in Grants for High Seatbelt Use Rates

The federal government awarded \$66 million in grants to Georgia, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Utah and West Virginia for achieving seatbelt use rates of 85 percent or above in 2006 and 2007. Each state needs to use at least \$1 million of the grants for behavioral safety activities, such as occupant protection, alcohol countermeasures and pedestrian, bicycle and motorcycle safety. For more information, go to <http://www.dot.gov/affairs/dot6108.htm>

Summer a Dangerous Time for 15-Passenger Vans

The summer months are the deadliest time of year for 15-passenger van occupants because of rollovers. Half of occupant fatalities happened in vans that were fully loaded; 59 percent of those killed were not wearing seat belts.



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National Highway Traffic Safety Administrator Nicole Nason is urging van users to take appropriate safety precautions during the busy travel season. "For a safe trip buckle up, check the tire pressure and make sure an experienced driver is behind the wheel before heading out on the roads this summer," Nason said.

U.S. DOT Competitions Encourage Continuation of Decreasing Injury Trend

Traffic injuries have fallen every year since 1995, a trend that includes teenage drivers. But teens are still overrepresented in crashes, with teen injuries making up 16 percent of the total even though they only represent 8 percent of the driving population. Transportation Secretary Mary E. Peters announced a national competition to develop an advertising campaign and materials with a fresh focus to encourage teens to drive safely. The winning campaign will receive \$5,000 and wide distribution. Two states that promote seat belt use through creative and highly visible law enforcement campaigns will receive \$300,000 each. Two \$100,000 awards will go to states that help combat drunk driving through promoting technology that would disable vehicles if a driver is intoxicated. For more information, go to www.nhtsa.gov

Final Report Explores Online Evaluation Technology

The U.S. Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration issued a report that examines the development of a hardware and software suite that measures driving characteristics that indicate unsafe driving behavior online. Feedback can be provided to drivers in real-time or through carrier management. For more information, go to <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/facts-research/research-technology/report/Onboard-Monitoring-and-Reporting-for-CMV-Safety-Final-Report-Dec2007.pdf>

International Traffic Safety News

Education Reforms Could Affect Drivers at All Stages

The United Kingdom is planning major reforms to driver education, testing and lifelong learning. One component will be developing vocational qualifications for at-work drivers, especially van drivers. Examples could include a new advanced driving qualification or a motorway driving course. The other focus is to tackle young driver fatalities by strengthening the current learning and testing procedures. Most groups applauded the announcement, but the Driving Instructors Association thinks the emphasis should be more on training than testing. Source: FleetNews, May 9, 2008

UK Fleet Managers Must Decide: Safety vs. Fuel Efficiency

Studies show small cars offer the worst protection against whiplash injuries, but fleets are being pressured to use more fuel-efficient vehicles. Fleet managers are caught in the middle, trying to decide whether to go for cleaner but less-safe cars or more-polluting but safer vehicles. "Ultimately employers have the task of managing safety in the workplace and that includes vehicles being driven for work," the Minister for Transport said. He said the answer is for manufacturers to develop more fuel-efficient vehicles while fleet managers train their drivers to be safer. Source: FleetNews, May 2, 2008

Hair Test Can Show History of Drug, Alcohol Use

Every day, 200,000 British employees show up to work hung over from the night before, affecting concentration and their ability to work at a normal pace. Forty-three percent of employers do not have alcohol policies and 84 percent do not run health awareness programs for staff. Many firms have policies to ensure employees are sober and to identify and help employees with drinking problems. Some companies are opting for hair testing, because test results can show alcohol and drug history for months before the sample was taken. Samples are generally taken at random or before an employee is hired. If employers can prove their drivers do not use drugs or alcohol, insurance premiums could be reduced. Tests should be used as a deterrent instead of a method for "catching" employees.

Source: FleetNews, May 6, 2008



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Volvo Envisions Injury-proof Vehicles in 12 Years

Volvo is attempting to make an injury-proof car by 2020. The vehicle will be able to steer, brake and learn about the road ahead from an electronic bumper. Other automakers are working on similar systems, but Volvo is the first to set a target date to eliminate death and injury in its cars. Volvo's crash testing center allows it to simulate any type of potential crash. The safety team also gets data from governments, insurance firms and its own on-call field investigation team. Volvo's bid to create an injury-proof car could help maintain its image as the leader in safety. For more information, go to <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/24406445/> Source: Reuters, May 1, 2008

Wi-fi Cameras Track Speeders

New wi-fi cameras are being installed along a stretch of road in the United Kingdom to track drivers' speeds. More than 30 have gone up along a five-mile road segment. The devices communicate with each other, enabling them to track a car while it moves. A computer then automatically calculates their speed. Drivers who go above the limit face a fine and three points on their license. Those caught during the trial will be warned instead of fined. For more information go to

[http://www.newhamrecorder.co.uk/content/newham/recorder/news/story.aspx?brand=RECOOnline&category=news NEWHAM&tBrand=northlondon24&tCategory=newsnewham&itemid=WeED24%20Apr%202008%2009%3A51%3A11%3A407](http://www.newhamrecorder.co.uk/content/newham/recorder/news/story.aspx?brand=RECOOnline&category=news%20NEWHAM&tBrand=northlondon24&tCategory=newsnewham&itemid=WeED24%20Apr%202008%2009%3A51%3A11%3A407) Source: Newham Recorder, April 24, 2008

Alberta Releases Report that Shows Little Support for Cell Phone Bans

The Alberta government released contentious findings of a study that shows no evidence of cell phone bans in other provinces and states reducing the number of traffic crashes. Contrary to what other studies have concluded, the report found that cell phone use while driving is less risky than other distractions. At least 45 countries, including Japan, Russia and Australia, have restrictions on talking on a phone while driving. The premier requested a study on the topic last fall, and the complete report was issued last month. For more information, go to <http://canadianpress.google.com/article/ALeqM5jNGqUo7N6eJug8Axw17CA6-iMtA>.

Source: The Canadian Press, April 28, 2008

Speed Warning Signs Proven Effective in Scotland

Because electronic signs warning drivers to slow down have helped reduce crashes by 60 percent, Scotland's capital will erect more of the signs. They're activated when drivers go above the speed limit and flash a message urging drivers to hit the brakes. Six are already in place, and the city council is planning to double that number in the next year. Most of the signs will go on roads with a speed limit of 30 mph. "Installing further signs at key hotspots should help to reinforce the message that speeding contributes to accidents and will not be tolerated," the city transport leader said. For more information, go to <http://news.scotsman.com/latestnews/Road-safety-focus-is-shifting.4039394.jp>

Source: The Scotsman, May 1, 2008

Group Criticizes Public Sector Approach to Driver Safety

The Association of Industry Road Safety Officers (AIRSO) plans to send a letter to the chief executives of every local authority warning that their attitude toward driver safety is "far from adequate." The group thinks an effective policy must be driven from the center of the organization. The campaign is focused on local authority fleets, and AIRSO members say it honestly is offering to help reduce fatalities. Source: FleetNews, May 12, 2008

Electronic Stability Control Comes to Ireland's Compact Cars

In-car safety features are crucial to reducing deaths in traffic crashes and make modern vehicles a relatively safe environment for drivers and their passengers. Electronic stability control is credited with saving 10,000 lives in the United States and 4,000 in Europe each year. A vehicle with ESC will apply the brakes to individual wheels if it detects the driver is diverting from the intended path and helps the vehicle get back on track. The difference in behavior and stability of a vehicle with ESC and one without is noticeable. Ford is the first automaker to



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standardize ESC in the compact family class in Ireland. "The price-conscious marketplace makes it hard for a manufacturer to step out of line in this way," Ford's Ireland chief said. "We've done it here, and I'm confident it will pay off."

Source: The Sunday Business Post, May 4, 2008

Work-Home

Bill to Toughen Teen Driving Laws Fails to Pass in Kansas

Some legislators attempted to make Kansas' driver education law a little tougher and more restrictive, but the bill didn't pass the Legislature this session. The bill would have delayed the age teens can get driving privileges by several months, limited the number of passengers and prohibited cell phone use. Kansas has one of the worst records in the country for teen fatalities. Several advocates spoke out in favor of the bill to the committee, but some parents thought restricting teens' driving would create a hardship for their families.

Ohioans May Soon Have Next-of-Kin Database

Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland soon could sign a bill into law that would create a statewide database for next-of-kin information. Citizens would be asked for that information when they visit a Bureau of Motor Vehicles office. If they choose to volunteer that information, it would only be available to first responders, BMV employees and law enforcement officers. Ohio would be the second state to establish a notification database. For more information, go to <http://news.cincinnati.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2008804280324>

Source: Cincinnati Enquirer, April 28, 2008

Parents Attend Driver Education Classes of Their Own

Parents of some Atlanta-area teen drivers are getting an education of their own. RoadWise America, a driver education program, offers SafeStart parent seminars in partnership with high schools. The two-hour program offers tips about driver's education classes, safe cars, changes in state licensing laws and a 10-step plan to coach teen drivers. Students whose parents attend get priority when they apply for school parking permits. "Parents were the component left out of teen driving," RoadWise's school liaison said. "As parents we need to have a very nuts-and-bolts conversation with our kids about driving."

Crossing Guards Fight Back with Hidden Cameras

Crossing guards in the United Kingdom are getting high-tech "lollipops" with video cameras that will record the bad behavior of the drivers they come across. The tiny cameras will be hidden in the black strip on their lollipop signs. The patrolmen and women often encounter problems with drivers disregarding their signs but have insufficient evidence to impose penalties. Lollipop patrols have the same status as a red light, and drivers who disregard them face a fine and three points on their licenses. Most volunteers are elderly, and there is a shortage of people who want to sign up for the job. For more information, go to

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article3846958.ece>

Source: Times Online, April 30, 2008

Ford Develops New Child Crash Test Dummy

Ford Motor Co. redesigned child-size crash-test dummies' midsections to help automakers develop seat belts that can protect children from abdominal injuries. Children ages 4 to 8 are 25 times more likely than younger children to suffer serious injuries to their abdomens. These injuries have become one of the most common for young children. Seat belts tend to ride up into their stomachs if they're not in booster seats. The new abdominal insert is made of silicon and filled with sensors that measure the pressure sustained in a crash. The hard plastic hip bones are rounder and smoother. Ford spent three years working with hospitals and a seat belt manufacturer on the new design. Improved seat belts would help, but using booster seats is the best way to prevent abdominal injuries in a crash. Source: USA Today, May 8, 2008



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