



Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers May 5, 2008

Latest Traffic Safety News

Some Systems Intended to Prevent Crashes Won't Save Many Lives

Some crash avoidance technologies are more likely to be lifesavers than others, according to an Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) report that studied five safety systems. Some drivers are likely to ignore the warnings or turn them off altogether. Technology that helps detect objects in the driver's blind spots won't save many lives because these types of crashes lead to only about 400 deaths a year. And any benefits that "adaptive" headlights might offer could be offset by people who would drive faster. Emergency brake assistance also shows less potential. Those that are more likely to save lives are sensors that warn of frontal collisions and lane departures. The IIHS estimates that 2,500 of the 10,000 fatalities a year caused by lane departures could be prevented if all vehicles had the warning system. Volvo is the only automaker that installs all five systems on some of its models.

Source: AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety e-Newsletter, April 18, 2008 from AFX News Limited, April 16, 2008 and USA Today, April 17, 2008

Traffic Crashes Place 6th on List of Causes of Debilitating Workplace Injuries

Liberty Mutual Research Institute for Safety's "2007 Workplace Safety Index" names the leading causes of the most disabling U.S. workplace injuries. Topping the list, which is based on 2005 data, is overexertion, which led to \$12.7 billion in costs. Highway incidents are sixth on the list, costing \$2.3 billion. For the complete index, go to <http://www.libertymutual.com/omapps/ContentServer?cid=1138355544266&pagename=ResearchCenter%2FDocument%2FShowDoc&c=Document>.

South Carolina Moves to Stiffen Penalties for Repeat Drunk Drivers

Several states such as South Carolina, which is trying to pass a tougher drunk driving bill, are attempting to crack down on repeat offenders this year. "We're seeing a lot more interest in state legislatures in improving their state laws," said Nicole Nason, administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). "Often what happens is you have a very public, very tragic crash. That gets people talking and gets the phones ringing in the state legislators' offices." The South Carolina bill contains stiffer penalties depending on the driver's blood-alcohol content and previous convictions. MADD's CEO Chuck Hurley said the state also should consider requiring wider use of alcohol ignition interlocks. NHTSA and the auto industry are working on a five-year, \$10 million project that could put interlocks in every new vehicle. Critics say people don't want interlocks as standard equipment. Wisconsin recently passed a law that imposes tougher penalties on drunk drivers with at least seven prior convictions. Source: USA Today, April 15, 2008

Alaskans Banned from Buying Alcohol Must Carry Restricted ID

A special ID card in Alaska lets liquor store employees and police know who shouldn't be shopping for alcohol. Those who are court ordered not to consume alcohol because of drunk driving convictions carry an ID with a band that shows the alcohol restrictions. Store clerks and wait staff aren't legally required to check for the alcohol restriction bands, but some employers have cash incentives for workers who catch the IDs. About 150 have been issued in the first two months of 2008. Anyone caught trying to buy booze with the restricted ID faces a \$1,000 fine. For more information, go to <http://www.ktuu.com/Global/story.asp?S=8166334> Source: KTUU, April 14, 2008

Automakers Embark on Project to Develop Alcohol Testing Devices

A five-year research program called Driver Alcohol Detection System for Safety (DADSS) aims to create devices that automatically test the sobriety of any driver, not just those who have been convicted of drunk driving. The goal is to



make a device that would be largely invisible and keep the vehicle from running if the driver had too much to drink. The research program, funded in part by automakers and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, launched a Web site, www.dadss.org, this month to help build public support. The first step is getting rid of the word "interlock" because it has negative connotations. Last year Nissan displayed a concept car with a sensor in the shift level that measures alcohol in perspiration, cameras that monitor eye movement and "sniffers" that check for exhaled alcohol. For more information, go to <http://www.autoweek.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080414/FREE/98283684/1530/FREE>
Source: Autoweek, April 14, 2008

Companies Could Get Tax Credits for Installing Safety Systems in Commercial Vehicles

Fleets would get a tax incentive for purchasing safety technology under legislation introduced in the House of Representatives. H.R. 3820 would allow a general business tax credit for half of the cost of certain advanced safety systems up to \$1,500. Brake stroke monitoring, lane departure warning collision and vehicle stability systems would qualify. The total credit is \$3,500 per vehicle, with a limit of \$350,000 per taxpayer per year. School buses, local or intercity buses and vehicles used to transport people or goods and weighing 26,001 pounds or more are eligible. Source: MEMA, April 2008

Court Says Drunk Driving Not Counted as Violent Felony

The Supreme Court ruled that drunk driving convictions do not count as violent felonies for enhancing prison sentences. The justices acknowledged that although drunk driving can cause great harm, it is different from other crimes that involve purposeful action. Three justices, Samuel Alito, David Souter and Clarence Thomas, dissented in *Begay v. U.S.* 60-11543. For more information, go to <http://ap.google.com/article/ALeqM5iBqxtn2gkBijR26hH9kizkPP8qSwD9031TL83> .
Source: Associated Press, April 16, 2008

Drivers Name New Car Features They Want

Half of drivers responding to a Harris Interactive poll said they would consider paying more for features that detect and warn them of objects in their blind spots. But drivers are wary of handing control of their vehicles over to computers, so they prefer a detection system to provide a noise warning, vibration or some other alert so they can take action. Similarly, drivers are interested in lane-departure warning technology but want to return to the proper lane themselves. The AutoTechcast study found that drivers are most interested in technology that helps protect themselves, not others. The feature drivers most want is rollover detection with side-curtain air bags. Drivers also like gas caps that seal with a spring-loaded cover, self-repairing paint and high-intensity discharge headlights. Many automakers are developing collision-avoidance technologies, but it will take a while for consumers to embrace the systems. For more information, go to <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/24159301/>
Source: MSNBC.msn.com, April 18, 2008

Ford Studies Safety Warnings in Simulator

Ford researchers are using their Virtual Test Track Experiment (VIRTTEX), an advanced driving simulator, to study how safety technologies in vehicles should alert drivers of potential dangers. They also conducted customer driving clinics to test the Cross Traffic Alert with Blind Spot Monitoring warning system. The feature alerts drivers backing out of a parking space when traffic approaches from the sides. It will debut early next year and has three warnings: a flashing red light on the side mirror, an audible alert and a written warning on the instrument panel. "A key is identifying the kinds of warnings that drivers will find both effective and easy to understand," a Ford manager said. Ford is trying to determine how audible, visual or tactile warnings, or a combination of these, should be used and how intense they should be. Early warnings could be helpful for distracted drivers but could frustrate those who are paying attention and already noticed the danger.

News from USDOT

Report: NHTSA Implements Campaigns Well; Needs to Improve Reporting, Evaluation



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The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that improved reporting and performance measures would enhance evaluation of high-visibility enforcement campaigns. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) coordinates with states to conduct high-visibility enforcement of seat belt and drunk driving laws. The GAO recommends that NHTSA establish a set of requirements for states to report federally funded HVE activities and include performance measures in evaluations. NHTSA has fully implemented the HVE program, but their evaluations have some shortcomings. Because reporting often is voluntary for local agencies, NHTSA has inconsistent and incomplete data from states, making the agency unable to provide meaningful analyses and comparisons between states. NHTSA is working to develop comprehensive performance measures, such as determining nighttime safety belt use. The GAO also assessed several states, which reported improved traffic safety statistics, insufficient staff to carry out campaigns and weak prosecution of impaired-driving arrests. For more information, go to <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d08477.pdf>
Source: Automotive Fleet e-News, April 22, 2008

International Traffic Safety News

AIDE Project Releases Results of Research about How Drivers Handle Safety Systems

Many crashes can be avoided if safety systems are coordinated and better tailored to suit the flow of traffic and the driver's situation, according to a final report from the AIDE research project coordinated by Volvo. About 200 European researchers, auto industry experts and representatives of the EU were present on April 15 and 16 when the four years of research were reported. AIDE is about developing a user interface between the vehicle's technology and the driver. Some of the research's results include integrated communication solutions, user-friendly instrument panels, coordinated safety functions and better understanding of how acoustic and visual signals affect driver behavior. For more information, go to http://www.volvo.com/trucks/global/en-gb/newsmedia/pressreleases/press_article.htm?pubid=4891
Source: Volvo press release, April 18, 2008

Automakers Work on System to Improve Car Strength in Side-impact Crashes

The European Union gave €29 million to fund the Advanced Protection Systems (APROSYS) project, which plans to launch a safety system that boosts the side protection of cars that are about to collide. Several major automakers are involved in developing the multi-directional camera monitor system that surveys 20 meters around the car. It identifies a side collision risk milliseconds before it happens. An on-board camera triggers a spring that pushes steel bolts fixed in the seats toward car doors, where metal boxes fall into place. The bolt and metal box stabilizes the car and absorbs energy on impact. Source: FleetNews, April 16, 2008

Drivers or Employers: Who Should Monitor Weather Conditions?

An industrial injury lawyer is advising fleet managers to stop drivers from going out on the road in hazardous conditions, but some are calling the suggestion unrealistic. "There is only a certain amount of hand-holding that fleet managers can be expected to do," said the communications director at DriveTech. "Any person driving for a living should take responsibility for planning their journey." However, once the driver makes that decision, the employer should support it. Fleet operator's association ACFO agrees. Recently a driver sued his employers after his vehicle overturned in high winds, causing him injuries. "It's down to the employer whether they should be sending employees out in dangerous conditions," the driver's lawyer said. Source: FleetNews, April 16, 2008

Prepare for Other Countries' Laws before Road Trips

Drivers from the United Kingdom must be aware of other countries' rules of the road when they travel for work. They must know the regulations about low emission zones, speed limits, tolls, the drunk driving limit and cell phone use. For example, it's illegal to run out of gas on the Autobahn, and violators face on-the-spot fines. If drivers don't have enough money on hand to pay up, they may be escorted to nearest cash point. Drivers who go 40 km/h over the limit in France will have their licenses confiscated at the scene. Drivers need to take their valid registration and a letter from their



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employer authorizing travel before they travel to another country. They must also have comprehensive insurance and bring documentation with them. License plates need to have the proper registration stickers.

Source: FleetNews, April 15, 2008

Report Focuses on Road Courtesy

A report recently released by the Centre for Automotive Safety Research at the University of Adelaide, Australia explores road courtesy and campaigns to promote it. Courtesy refers both to behaviors and the attitudes and habits that accompany behaviors. For more information, go to

<http://casr.adelaide.edu.au/publications/researchreports/CASR044.pdf> Source: TRB e-Newsletter, April 15, 2008

China's First Center for Private Cars Opens in Beijing

China established its first administration center for private vehicles in Beijing. The center provides car owners with education about traffic policies to help drivers improve their skills. "It will help develop a mechanism to better manage and serve the soaring number of private automobile owners in the capital," the director of the municipal traffic management bureau said. More than 2.4 billion personal vehicles are now on Beijing's streets. The rapid increase of private cars and drivers has caused more traffic jams and crashes, but there are no effective measures in place to manage the situation. The creation of the center is hoped to help the city's traffic environment before the Olympics. For more information, go to http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-04/14/content_7972554.htm

Source: China Daily, April 14, 2008

Communication between Drivers, Operators Key Issue for Fleets

The No. 1 issue of commercial vehicle fleets trying to meet their duty of care obligations is driver communication. "Because truck and van drivers tend to be out on the road all the time, it is difficult to let them know about basic measures that the new law may say you need to put in place, such as certain aspects of your risk management policy," said an expert on fleet law. One example is how to let drivers know about a new policy regarding mobile phone use and make sure they understand and follow it. Driver fatigue is a linked issue, because it is difficult for fleet managers to know whether drivers are getting enough rest. Source: FleetNews, April 17, 2008

Free Film Offers Advice for At-Work Drivers

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents produced a short film called "Driving for Work" to raise awareness of the risks business drivers face. Three segments feature typical at-work drivers: a van delivery driver, a young sales representative and a senior manager. Road safety experts and emergency services technicians offer advice in the film. Viewers will recognize character traits, situations and motivations that are common to at-work drivers. The scenarios are meant to stimulate discussion about drowsy driving, speed, distraction and aggression. It's available for free online at <http://www.rospa.com/roadsafety/video/drivingforwork/index.htm> . Source: RoSPA

Interactive Web Portal Helps Elevate Discussion of Global Traffic Safety

The global Transport Knowledge Partnership (gTKP) is a platform for improving traffic safety in developing and transition countries. The partnership offers access to experts and best practices in road safety and other transport topics. gTKP came about as a result of a World Health Organization report that recommends an integrated approach to road safety improvements. The report also found that seat belts, child restraints and helmets have been effective and should be implemented, along with other best practices, worldwide. Traffic crashes are a leading cause of death and injury around the world, especially in developing countries. Children and those who cannot afford vehicles are affected the most. For more information, go to <http://www.gtkp.com/sectors.asp?step=4&contentID=545>

Source: RoadSafe e-News, April 2008

ESC Manufacturer Joins Others in Campaign to Increase Awareness

Electronic stability control could help save lives of the 800 to 1,000 people who are killed each year while driving for work. Bosch, the manufacturer of Electronic Stability Programme, joined together with other members of the European



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eSafetyAware organization for the ChooseESC! campaign to raise awareness of the technology. Bosch research found that only 9 percent of those polled in the United Kingdom knew what ESC is. The campaign calls for automakers to fit ESC in all vehicles as standard equipment. Last year, only 45 percent of UK vehicles were equipped with ESC. For more information, go to http://www.bosch.co.uk/content/language2/html/715_5779.htm Source: RoadSafe e-News, April 2008

Work-Home

Maine Prohibits Smoking in Car when Minors Present

Maine Gov. John Baldacci banned smoking in a vehicle with children under 16 present when he signed the measure into law. Maine now has one of the toughest restrictions in the nation regarding secondhand smoke and minors in vehicles. The law takes effect 90 days after the legislative session adjourns and was modeled after a Bangor city ordinance. Police will issue written warnings for violations the first year; after that violators face a \$50 fine. Violating the law is a primary offense. "Clearly, people react in a much different way if they can be pulled over," a child health advocate and supporter of the law said. Plans already are underway to strengthen the law and make it apply to children under 18. Opponents of the law say it is an invasion of privacy and an infringement on civil liberties. For more information, go to <http://bangornews.com/news/t/news.aspx?articleid=162862&zoneid=500>

Source: Bangor Daily News, April 11, 2008

Proper Seat Belt Use Saves Fetuses, Research Shows

Researchers at the University of Michigan found that 200 fetuses a year would not be lost if pregnant women properly buckled up every time they rode in a car. "It's very clear, based on this study, that pregnant women should buckle up every single time they're in a vehicle," senior author Mark D. Pearlman, M.D. said. About 370 fetuses die as a result of car crashes every year in the United States. The research debunks a myth that seat belts are not safe for pregnant women. Routine use of seat belts by pregnant women will prevent 84 percent of serious fetal injuries and death in car crashes. After the study, Pearlman initiated a campaign called Safe Babi (Seatbelts Are For Everyone Buckle All Babies In). Pearlman's other research shows that woman whose prenatal care providers mention proper seat belt use are more likely to buckle up. Source: Medical News Today, April 2, 2008

Key Messages Help in Material Development for National Youth Traffic Safety Month

National Youth Traffic Safety Month key message points help advocates talk to community leaders and the media. They can also be used to develop posters or other tools. One of the main points to keep in mind is that traffic crashes are the leading cause of death and injury for youth. Also, National Youth Traffic Safety Month is a good opportunity to take action and promote the people who help keep youth safe on the roads. It's one step in the process of a continuing effort to educate, raise awareness and effect change. For more information, go to www.noys.org

Children Used to Walk, Ride Bikes to School More

Fewer children biked or walked to school in 2001 than in 1969—the percentage dropped from 42 to 16.2 percent. Researchers also found that a smaller percentage of students lived within a mile of school in 2001 than in 1969. In 2001, about half of the students used more than one mode of transportation or made an additional stop between home and school. Multidisciplinary efforts are necessary to increase the percentage of students who bike or walk to school and to decrease the distances students have to travel.

Researchers Study Roundabouts to Test How Blind Pedestrians Can Cross Safely

A Western Michigan University project, funded by a National Eye Institute grant, is testing the effectiveness of a video camera system in roundabouts. The system is designed to detect when vehicles have stopped upstream to allow pedestrians to cross. One of the researchers spent a week in Raleigh to shadow 17 functionally blind volunteers as they tried to navigate the crosswalks of a busy roundabout on N.C. State University's campus. No pedestrians were injured, but it is too soon to determine whether the video system is effective. Some officials want to put up traffic signals at multilane roundabouts to clear space for pedestrians, but others say signals negate the purpose of a roundabout. For



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more information, go to <http://www.newsobserver.com/news/story/1045551.html/> or <http://www.walkinginfo.org/aps/2-16.cfm> Source: The News & Observer, April 22, 2008

New Cameras Will Help Detect Bicycles Near Intersections

South City, California plans to install 23 video systems that detect bicyclists on traffic lights east of Highway 101. The video detectors activate when bicyclists approach the intersection. The detectors sit on top of traffic lights and spot bicycles' shapes through changes in video pictures. "A lot of times, I have to veer off and push the 'walk' button," a bicyclist said. "With detectors, I'd ride up and it will see you coming ... It will make it a little faster and more convenient."

For more information, go to http://www.examiner.com/a-1355284~New_cameras_will_speed_up_South_City_bike_commutes.html Source: The Examiner, April 23, 2008

Manufacturers Building Stereos that Play Music from iPods, not CDs

Car-stereo makers are developing units that ditch compact disc slots for iPod and MP3 ports. The new stereos range in price from \$100-400 and are aimed at the growing segment of music lovers who carry their collection in their pockets. The industry calls the units "mech-less" because they lack mechanical parts. The stereos will be slow to replace CD players because older drivers still have most of their music on discs. The next step could go even further--makers are working with satellite providers so drivers can listen to their music wherever they go without even carrying an MP3 player. For more information, go to http://www.usatoday.com/money/autos/2008-04-23-blauplunkt-mp3_N.htm

Source: USA Today, April 23, 2008

Workplace sites of Interest

SAMHSA Announces Availability of New Drug-Free Workplace Kit

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has developed a Drug-Free Workplace Kit, suitable for all sizes of workplaces. The free kit provides public and private workplaces with practical evidence-based information, resources, and tools for producing and maintaining drug-free workplace policies and programs. For more information, link to: <http://www.jointogether.org/news/yourturn/announcements/2008/samhsa-announces-availability.html>



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