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# NETSWork

Summaries of timely road safety news, events, and alerts.

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November 16, 2009

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## LATEST ROAD SAFETY NEWS

### IIHS studies impact of cell phone laws

Source: *Automotive Fleet*, October 20, 2009

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety recently looked at areas that have banned the use of hand-held cell phones while driving to see if those restrictions were resulting in a long-term change in driver behavior. In Washington, D.C., the ban caused a significant initial drop in driver hand-held cell phone use and that drop has largely survived the test of time. The bans in Connecticut and New York also had initial success, but driver cell phone use has again begun to rise, although not to the pre-ban level. To see the full article, go to: [www.automotive-fleet.com](http://www.automotive-fleet.com)

### Senate panel takes up distracted-driving bill

Source: *The Hill*, October 28, 2009

A bipartisan bill introduced in late October would provide incentives for states to ban drivers 18 years of age and under from using their cell phones. The legislation, introduced in the Senate, seeks to curb deaths and injuries due to so-called distracted driving. The measure attracted a fair amount of support during a Senate Commerce Committee hearing on the day it was introduced, but some lawmakers on the panel said legislation should be left up to the states. The legislation would create a grant program for states that enact laws prohibiting texting and cell phone use while driving. To qualify for the grants, states would have to enact a ban on texting while driving and impose significant penalties for drivers who cause an accident. To see the full article, go to: [thehill.com](http://thehill.com)

### Once a tourist attraction, pedicabs grow in everyday use

Source: *USA Today*, November 10, 2009

Viewed as a green transportation alternative, Pedicabs, adult-size tricycles with room in the back for passengers, have gone from the occasional tourist attraction to a more prominent means of public transportation, prompting a race by cities to beef up safety ordinances amid backlash from automobile cab operators. In New York City, a string of traffic accidents and brawls involving pedicab drivers prompted officials to impose new regulations. Pedicabs are not just for big cities, becoming popular in college towns and places with downtown nightlife. To see the full article, go to: [www.usatoday.com/](http://www.usatoday.com/)

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## About NETSWork

NETSWork is published electronically the 15th of each month by the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety, [Lynda Morrissey](#), editor, Jack Hanley, Executive Director. It is intended for the use of NETS members.

For more information, contact [Lynda Morrissey](#)

## Note from the editor

All links to stories have

## Why driving a car has never been safer

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Source: Wall Street Journal, October 21, 2009

By one measure, American motorists are safer than they've been in decades—though it's not clear exactly why. The rate of fatalities per 100 million miles of vehicle travel on U.S. roads is at its lowest since the government began keeping such data in the mid-1970s. If current trends continue, it's possible that fewer than 35,000 people will die on U.S. highways this year. While the cause of the decline is unknown, it could be due to a combination of new technology and better driver behavior. To see the full article, go to: [online.wsj.com](http://online.wsj.com)

been tested and are active 24 hours prior to distribution, however, links may become inactive over time at the discretion of the publication source.

## Communities try to prevent pedestrian traffic deaths

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Source: USA Today, November 9, 2009

More than 76,000 Americans have been killed walking or crossing the street in the past 15 years, and pedestrians account for about 11.8% of all traffic fatalities, according to the groups Transportation for America and the Surface Transportation Policy Partnership. However, less than 1.5% of federal transportation money is spent on projects for walkers and bicyclists.

Pedestrian deaths have held fairly steady in the past decade — more than 4,500 a year, according to federal data; however, the numbers have been spiking in some communities. Therefore, groups are asking Congress to offer incentives in a new transportation bill for states to spend more of their share of federal funds on road projects to address the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, children, the elderly and disabled. To see the full article, go to: [www.usatoday.com](http://www.usatoday.com)

To view or download the full pdf report, *Dangerous by Design* by Transportation for America, which includes rankings of most dangerous cities for pedestrians, go to: [t4america.org](http://t4america.org)

## Nevada honored for fewer traffic deaths

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Source: Reno Gazette Journal, November 4, 2009

Nevada received the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials 2009 Safety Leadership Award. The honor is for programs that helped decrease traffic deaths. Since a safety plan's inception in 2006, Nevada traffic deaths have decreased by nearly one quarter, from 431 in 2006 to 324 in 2008. Numerous road safety improvements include more than 1,300 miles of centerline rumble strips, 30 miles of cable median barrier, an upcoming northeastern Nevada safety overpass to reduce vehicle-animal collisions and over 75,000 hours of flattening slopes to reduce severity of roadside crashes. To see the full article, go to: [www.rgj.com](http://www.rgj.com)

## Most auto deaths from single-car crashes

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Source: Delaware Online, November 4, 2009

Most auto crash deaths in Delaware occur in single vehicle crashes and the majority is attributable to distracted drivers, according to analysis by AAA Mid-Atlantic. In the region, Delaware has a higher percentage (54 percent) than one state, lower than two. In Maryland, 53 percent of its 591 traffic fatalities involved one-vehicle crashes, while Pennsylvania showed 58 percent of 1,468 road deaths in such crashes. New Jersey had 63 percent of its 590 deaths in one-vehicle crashes. AAA called the numbers "troubling" and said overall road fatalities in Delaware rose by about 3

percent over the year before. To see the full article, go to: [www.delawareonline.com](http://www.delawareonline.com)

## **Drowsy Driving Prevention Week begins**

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*Source: OHS Online, November 2, 2009*

Drowsy Driving Prevention Week was held during the first week of November. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that driving while drowsy is a major contributor to an estimated 100,000 motor vehicle crashes per year and results in more than 1,500 deaths nationwide. Sleepiness demonstrably impairs safe driving by reducing alertness and slowing reaction time. According to the CDC, several factors can contribute to drowsy driving. Although insufficient sleep duration and fragmented sleep are significant causes of drowsiness, circadian rhythms cause increased sleepiness during the afternoon, even with adequate sleep. Sedating medications and consumption of alcohol also cause drowsiness, which is amplified with sleep deprivation. Untreated sleep disorders also can contribute to excessive sleepiness. To see the full article, go to: [ohsonline.com](http://ohsonline.com)

## **Road safety campaigns take multicultural approach**

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*Source: USA Today, October 20, 2009*

Highway safety campaigns across the USA are increasingly being tailored to reflect growth in minority groups and even refugee communities where English is not fully understood. In Ohio, officials designing a seat-belt campaign aimed at the state's large Somali refugee population wanted to adapt the popular "Click it or ticket" slogan but found that "ticket" doesn't translate. Instead, Ohio is officially translating the message to say "Strap it, or lose your livestock." To see the full article, go to: [www.usatoday.com](http://www.usatoday.com)

## **Hybrid vehicles have higher pedestrian crashes**

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*Source: Consumer Reports.org, November 6, 2009*

A new government study has discovered that hybrid electric vehicles have a higher rate of pedestrian and bicyclist crashes than do conventional vehicles in certain situations. NHTSA looked at state crash data to compare crash rates on these two types of vehicles. Out of 8,387 hybrids, 77 (or .9 percent) were involved in crashes with pedestrians. Out of 559,703 conventional vehicles studied, 3,578 (or .6 percent) were involved in crashes with pedestrians. In crashes involving bicyclists, 48 (or almost .6 percent) were involved in crashes with a hybrid vehicle whereas conventional vehicles were implicated in 1,862 (or .3 percent) of crashes. The study found that these incidences were more likely to occur in areas with low speed limits. The hybrids had a higher incidence—two times more likely to have a pedestrian crash—when they were slowing or stopping, backing up, or going in or out of a parking space. Most hybrids employ their electrical motors only at these situations, making these cars eerily quiet. To see the full article, go to: [blogs.consumerreports.org](http://blogs.consumerreports.org)

## **Are carmakers doing enough to meet older drivers' needs?**

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*Source: Newsday (Long Island,) October 17, 2009*

Some aging drivers are raising the question of whether carmakers — in their zeal to attract younger buyers — are paying enough attention to older motorists who tend to drive less and buy fewer cars. One thing is certain: Older drivers are getting increasingly difficult to ignore. The 65-and-older population is expected to double, to 70 million, by 2030, as baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) glide into their

autumn years. Today's senior is healthier, continues to drive longer and drives more miles than previous generations, the Federal Highway Administration reports. Carmakers contend their innovations benefit drivers of all ages, but concede that a model with a reputation as a car for old people is not likely to sell well. To see the full article, go to: [www.newsday.com](http://www.newsday.com)

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## Many in U.S. want texting at the wheel to be illegal

Source: *New York Times*, November 2, 2009

Nearly all Americans say sending a text message while driving should be illegal, and about half say texting while behind the wheel should be punished at least as harshly as drunken driving, according to a recent New York Times/CBS News poll. Ninety-seven percent support the prohibition of texting while driving, an unusual level of agreement for any topic. Eighty percent also support a ban on talking on a hand-held mobile phone while driving. Fifty percent said the punishment for texting while driving should be just as severe as for drunken driving. To see the full article, go to: [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)

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## New Mexico drops out of top 10 for DUI

Source: *New Mexico Business Weekly*, October 16, 2009

After once having the worst DUI problem in the nation, New Mexico has now dropped from the list of the worst ten states. According to a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration report, the state dropped to 11th in the nation for the number of DUI fatalities per 100,000 population. The figure represents a 21 percent reduction in drunk driving-related fatalities in 2008. New Mexico was ranked 9th in the nation for DUI fatalities in both 2006 and 2007. To see the full article, go to: [albuquerque.bizjournals.com](http://albuquerque.bizjournals.com)

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## Operation Safe Driver campaign

Source: *Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance*, October 20, 2009

Each year more than 40,000 people die on the roadways throughout North America – many of which are the direct result of unsafe and aggressive driving practices by both passenger and commercial vehicle drivers. Each Year in October, law enforcement across North America responds by actively targeting these drivers during a campaign dubbed 'Operation Safe Driver.' Operation Safe Driver held activities across the United States, Canada and Mexico that aimed to increase commercial vehicle and non-commercial vehicle traffic enforcement; safety belt enforcement; driver roadside inspections; driver regulatory compliance; implementation of commercial driver educational and awareness programs to the motor carrier population; and, awareness to the motoring public about safe operations around commercial motor vehicles. To see the full article, go to: [www.cvsa.org](http://www.cvsa.org)

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## Minnesota traffic deaths down 30 percent since launch of Toward Zero Deaths program

Source: *The Hutchinson Leader*, October 28, 2009

At a gathering of Minnesota traffic safety leaders, state officials highlighted the success of the TZD program while acknowledging traffic challenges ahead. Since 2003, the state's annual number of traffic deaths has declined 30 percent. In 2009, the lower death count trend continues: to-date there are 337 traffic deaths compared to 352 at this time in 2008, which had the lowest annual fatality count since 1945.

State officials attribute the decline in deaths to many factors, including important legislation such as the 0.08 alcohol concentration law and the primary seat belt law, as well as the economy which has resulted in motorists conserving fuel by driving at safer speeds. To see the full article, go to: [www.hutchinsonleader.com](http://www.hutchinsonleader.com)

## Shifting careers: Fort Worth man sees the light, becomes 'headlight doctor'

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Source: *Fort Worth Business Journal*, November 2, 2009

A Fort Worth native has recently launched a new career as The Headlight Doctor, a mobile service in which he cleans, resurfaces and corrects aging headlamps on automobiles across the Fort Worth-Dallas area to improve lighting and aid drivers' sight. Woody Dlugosch compares the deterioration of headlamps to a cataract that limits people's vision as they age. So far he's refurbished at least 259 headlight lenses. To see the full article, go to: [www.fwbusinesspress.com](http://www.fwbusinesspress.com)

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## WORK - HOME

### National Teen Driver Safety Week

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Source: *Centers for Disease Control*

National Teen Driver Safety Week, October 18-24, highlighted the importance of parents supervising their teen's driving and establishing rules of the road. To increase awareness of the importance of parents in managing teen driver behavior and educating teens about high-risk activities that lead to motor-vehicle crashes, CDC has developed a communication campaign targeting the parents of novice teen drivers. The Parents Are the Key campaign is being pilot tested in central Arkansas and Columbus, Ohio. The campaign encourages parents to learn about and ensure that their teen adheres to their state's GDL system requirements, establish rules of the road that limit novice teens' nighttime driving and driving under other risky conditions, and enforce the rules with a parent-teen contract. To see the full article, go to: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

### Georgia launches teen driving safety website

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Source: *The Rome (Ga.) New-Tribune*, October 21, 2009

The Georgia Department of Transportation is launching a new resource for teen drivers and their parents. The website, "Teen Driving Safety 101," [www.dot.ga.gov/teendriving](http://www.dot.ga.gov/teendriving) is a "one-stop" information portal providing information on driving laws, safety tips and travel information to help teens stay safe behind the wheel. The website was developed in partnership with the Governor's Office of Highway Safety, the Department of Driver Services, and Riverdale High School's Technology Team. In addition to these partners, the site includes links to other government agencies and sites with information about teen driving laws and general travel information. To see the full article, go to: [romenews-tribune.com](http://romenews-tribune.com)

### Texas troopers riding school buses to observe motorists behavior as part of School Bus Safety Week

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Source: *Times Record News (Wichita Falls, Tex.)*, October 16, 2009

Texas State Troopers rode random school buses, observing how well motorists obey

traffic safety rules around school buses. Drivers of cars and trucks often fail to stop for a school bus when its red alternating flashing lights are on. Drivers who are following or approaching a school bus also must stop when the driver cranks out its STOP sign.

The effort was made in honor of National School Bus Safety Week. Troopers were specifically watching for motorists who illegally pass school buses. To see the full article, go to: [www.timesrecordnews.com](http://www.timesrecordnews.com)

## Daylight savings end increases drowsy driving risk

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Source: National Road Safety Foundation (News Release), October 29, 2009

When clocks go back an hour early, our roads and highways may become more dangerous as people drive drowsy, according to The National Road Safety Foundation, Inc. (NRSF), a non-profit group that offers free driver safety programs.

Drowsy driving is a significant factor in traffic crashes. The risk increases as daylight savings time ends and we spend more time driving at night. Studies show 60 percent of U.S. motorists have driven while fatigued and nearly 37 percent admit to having fallen asleep at the wheel. Drowsy driving is especially prevalent among teens, who tend to keep late hours and think they can function on minimal sleep. Teens actually require more sleep than adults. To see the full article, go to: [www.prnewswire.com](http://www.prnewswire.com)

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## WORKPLACE ROAD SAFETY

### NETS-sponsored benchmark of 350,000 passenger vehicles, 6.78 billion miles of travel yields best practices in fleet safety

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Source: Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (News release via Reuters), November 2, 2009

A study of 36 leading companies with a combined fleet of 350,000 passenger vehicles that logged nearly seven billion miles in 2008, has yielded best practices of effective fleet safety programs. The best practices involved use of cell phone policies banning both hands-free and hand-held devices, the sharing of crash data throughout the organizations and driver training. The Strength in Numbers fleet safety benchmarking study brings together companies willing to look at their own crash metrics, compare findings and share what they have learned. To see the full news release, go to: [www.reuters.com](http://www.reuters.com)

### Number of companies implementing cell phone bans grows

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Source: National Safety Council (news release via Reuters), October 23, 2009

A new survey of National Safety Council members has revealed that 99 percent of companies with policies prohibiting the use of cell phones and messaging devices while driving have experienced no change in productivity — and some have seen an increase in productivity — after the policies took effect. Productivity concerns were the top reason given by respondents who have not established a cell phone policy. Fifty-eight percent (1,163 out of 2,004 respondents) said their organization had a cell

phone policy of some kind. Of those, 469 member companies have enacted full cell phone prohibition policies, which prohibit employees from using hands-free or handheld phones. To see the full article, go to: [www.reuters.com](http://www.reuters.com)

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## U.S. Foodservice fleet to cut idling & fuel use

*Source: Automotive Fleet, October 20, 2009*

U.S. Foodservice—Fort Mill is working to reduce fleet idling time and increase fuel efficiency as part of its latest environmental efforts. The company division plans to use strategic route-planning technologies to reduce its fleet's "idle time" and raise its fuel efficiency, collectively saving 13,000 gallons of fuel in its service area. Since 2007, the company has sought new ways to reduce energy consumption, eliminate waste, and add recycling programs. Earlier this year, the company also announced plans to further improve fleet productivity by scaling up successful initiatives such as driver awareness programs, automatic idle shutoff, maximum speed controls, and improved trailer cooling practices. To see the full article go to: [www.automotive-fleet.com](http://www.automotive-fleet.com)

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## Brake campaign to prevent whiplash

*Source: Brake, October 19, 2009*

An initiative coordinated by Brake, a British road safety charity, is calling on fleet safety managers to get expert advice on saving their employees' necks by attending the low-cost Fleet Safety Forum workshop on preventing whiplash and head injuries. Whiplash causes serious neck injuries and is responsible for around 1,184 claims for personal injury every day. A correctly fitted head restraint can reduce the chance of suffering a whiplash injury by 24 percent, yet 75 percent of UK drivers are unaware of how to position their head restraints to minimize this risk. To see the full article, go to: [www.contracthireandleasing.com](http://www.contracthireandleasing.com)

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## INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

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### GPS causing truckers to crash into bridges

*Source: FoxNews.com, October 19, 2009*

New York state officials want to take action against truck drivers whose global positioning systems routes take them on roads with overpasses that are too low for the heights of their vehicles. Governor Patterson is proposing jail time and confiscation of trucks as punishment for drivers who use GPS to take more hazardous routes and end up striking bridges. New York state alone has seen more than 1,400 bridge strikes in the past 15 years, including 46 so far this year in suburban Westchester County, damaging many old bridges already in need of repair. To see the full article, go to: [www.foxnews.com](http://www.foxnews.com)

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### Volvo safety, 2011 style: it brakes for walkers

*Source: The New York Times, November 13, 2009*

A new pedestrian-crash-prevention system to be introduced on the redesigned 2011 Volvo S60 will go beyond simply warning drivers of impending disasters. It actually takes control of the car to prevent them. The new feature, the Pedestrian Safety System, identifies pedestrians (and bike riders) in front of a vehicle using a video

camera similar to those of lane-departure warning systems. The system uses sophisticated algorithms to judge whether a person is likely to jump in front of the car, based on the individual's gait and position. If needed, the technology stops the vehicle to prevent a collision. To see the full article, go to: [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)

## Google announces Google Maps navigation

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Source: *Google Blog*, October 28, 2009

Google has developed a beta application to connect Google Maps to cell phones enabling you to say your destination and have it read off your turn-by-turn directions. This new feature comes with everything you'd expect to find in a GPS navigation system, like 3D views, turn-by-turn voice guidance and automatic rerouting. To date, just one phone (from Verizon) accommodates the free application. To see the full article as well as a video demo of the application, go to: [googleblog.blogspot.com](http://googleblog.blogspot.com)

## Cars are approaching 'auto' pilot mode

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Source: *MSNBC*, November 6, 2009

A new breed of prototype automobile can drive without the help of unreliable humans, and major car companies are paying attention. With motor-vehicle accidents claiming more than a million lives worldwide annually, car companies are pushing the development of technology that increasingly borrows control from erratic human beings, allowing the car to drive itself. General Motors teamed up with Carnegie Mellon to form a five-year, \$5 million dollar Collaborative Research Laboratory to work on autonomous vehicles and many car makers already have "semi-autonomous" features on today's vehicles. To see the full article, go to: [www.msnbc.msn.com](http://www.msnbc.msn.com)

## Ford's 'Distraction Lab' researchers use high tech goggles to help ensure drivers keep eyes on the road

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Source: *Ford Motor Company (news release)*, October 20, 2009

Ford Motor Company is utilizing high-tech goggles that measure the amount of time drivers take their eyes off the road when using in-vehicle technologies such as GPS navigation systems. The special "occlusion" goggles are used in testing at Ford's "Distraction Lab." The test subject wears goggles equipped with small liquid crystal display (LCD) screens that rapidly blink open and closed in a regulated sequence while the subject views graphics and text information on a new device such as a navigation screen. If 85 percent or more of test subjects are able to comprehend the information on the screen in the time allowed, then the related task — such as reading and selecting an address on a navigation screen — is considered compliant with industry guidelines. To see the full news release, go to: [www.prnewswire.com](http://www.prnewswire.com)

## Hybrid cars may include fake vroom for safety

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Source: *New York Times*, October 14, 2009

For decades, automakers have been on a quest to make cars quieter. They have finally succeeded. Plug-in hybrid and electric cars, it turns out, not only reduce air pollution, but noise pollution as well. However, that has created a different problem—they aren't noisy enough. Now safety experts, worried that hybrids pose a threat to pedestrians, children and others who can't hear them, want automakers to supply digitally enhanced vehicle sound. Some Automakers are turning to movie sound effects experts for help.

The Fisker Karma, an \$87,900 plug-in hybrid, is expected to emit a sound described as “a cross between a starship and a Formula One car.” Nissan is also consulting with the film industry on sounds that could be emitted by its Leaf battery-electric vehicle, while Toyota has been working with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the National Federation of the Blind and the Society of Automotive Engineers on sounds for electric vehicles. To see the full article, go to:

[www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)

## **Honda bicycle simulator developed for traffic safety education**

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*Source: Auto123.com, October 18, 2009*

Honda Motor Co. announced plans to begin Japan-wide sales starting February 2010, of the Honda Bicycle Simulator developed for the purpose of traffic safety education. By safely experiencing the possible risks bicycle riders may face, Honda says users will improve their ability to predict risks and increase safety awareness. In addition, a rider evaluation session that follows the riding simulation will help users learn traffic rules and manners. Honda will aim for widespread use of this simulator by a range of customers including public offices, law-enforcement organizations, driving schools and educational institutions which conduct bicycle safety education programs primarily for school children and senior citizens. To see the full article, go to: [www.auto123.com](http://www.auto123.com)

## **Ford says inflatable seat belt improves safety, comfort, too**

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*Source: USA TODAY, November 5, 2009*

Ford Motor Co. is now preparing to roll out a new technology aimed at improving the safety of rear-seat passengers: inflatable seat belts. The belts expand like an air bag in the event of a crash and distribute the force of the impact across a wider area of the passenger's chest. The belts first will be an option on the next-generation Ford Explorer in the U.S., then rolled out in Europe and other markets. The belts have been under development for more than a decade. Ford first displayed them at the 2001 North American International Auto Show in Detroit, and has continuously worked on the development since. To see the full article, go to: [www.usatoday.com](http://www.usatoday.com)

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## **US DOT NEWS**

### **Newly formed safety council to take safety commitment to next level**

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*Source: DOT News Release, October 26, 2009*

Secretary LaHood convened the first meeting of a newly created U.S. Department of Transportation Safety Council formed to tackle critical transportation safety issues facing the department's 10 operating administrations. Many important safety initiatives were being pursued in the department's agencies without a formal process for sharing data, best practices and strategies. Secretary LaHood created the Safety Council to serve a broad safety leadership role and help break down organizational silos, enabling an even stronger safety culture. The goals of the Safety Council are to further enhance the safety focus throughout all agencies of the department and improve the impact of the department's safety programs. The Council, chaired by Transportation Deputy Secretary John Porcari, is comprised of the heads of the

Department's 10 agencies. To see the full news release, go to: [www.dot.gov](http://www.dot.gov)

## **FCC, DOT exploring technologies to curb distracted driving**

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*Source: PC Magazine, November 4, 2009*

The Federal Communications Commission and the Department of Transportation announced a joint effort to explore technologies that might cut down on dangerous driving practices, like texting while driving. The two agencies will set up a working group to evaluate technology-based solutions to distracted driving, and will also work together on efforts to educate the public about the dangers of the practice. To see the full article, go to: [www.pcmag.com](http://www.pcmag.com)

## **FMCSA conducts first national drug and alcohol strike force; commercial drivers found in violation taken off the road**

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*Source: US DOT News Release, October 23, 2009*

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) today announced 77 commercial bus and truck drivers are off the road and over 80 carriers face enforcement action as a result of FMCSA's first national drug and alcohol strike force. FMCSA examined the drug and alcohol safety records of commercial drivers employed by bus companies, interstate passenger carriers, hazardous material transporters and general freight long-haul trucking companies. The 77 commercial drivers face civil penalties, can no longer operate a commercial motor vehicle and will likely face a monetary fine. Additionally, 84 commercial carriers face enforcement action for violations such as using a driver that has tested positive for illegal drugs and for not instituting a drug and alcohol testing program. To see the full news release, go to: [www.dot.gov](http://www.dot.gov)

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## INTERNATIONAL ROAD SAFETY NEWS

### **Study: the effects of electronic stability control interventions on rural road crashes in Australia**

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*Source: Australian Government, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, October 2009*

A new study from Australian researchers tested the effect of Electronic Stability Control on reducing crashes on rural roads. While it is known from other research that ESC lowers crash rates, how the system's interventions achieve this, across a wide range of crash types and unique situations is unclear. The study developed 20 rural road crash scenarios based on actual crashes from an Australian database to compare the dynamics of a vehicle equipped with ESC to the dynamics of a vehicle not equipped with ESC. The study concluded that ESC helped in every situation they could test, by preventing the crash, reducing the severity, or both. To view or download a pdf of the full study, go to: [www.infrastructure.gov.au](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au)

### **Is hands-free cell use in a car safe? Half of Canadians say no**

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Source: *Toronto Star*, November 4, 2009

Canadians are split nearly in half over whether hands-free mobile use is safe and whether any talking, texting or emailing while driving should be banned, a survey released on Nov. 3 reported. On the heels of Ontario recently banning drivers from talking, texting or emailing on mobiles, the study found 41 percent considered hands-free alternatives unsafe, including 36 percent in Ontario. Talking with a headset and using voice dialing are legal in Ontario. The youngest adults weren't the most likely to consider hands-free talking safe. Age did play a factor, however, in answering whether all cell phone use, including hands-free, should be banned. Only 27 per cent of the 18 to 34 age group said yes, with the percentage growing as the respondents got older, up to 58 percent of those over 50. To see the full article, go to: [www.thestar.com](http://www.thestar.com)

## **Hand-held cell phones banned while driving in New Zealand, but hands-free calling in cars almost as dangerous**

Source: *National Business Review (New Zealand)*, November 1, 2009

From the first of November, drivers in New Zealand will only be allowed to use mobile phones in their cars if they use a hands-free kit or phone cradle. The ban, and its timing, were officially confirmed in August. Mobile phones cannot be used, even while stopped at a red light, unless the phone is in a fixed cradle or a hands-free kit or headset is used. Those who break the rules face a fine and demerit points. Research conducted into the relative danger of using a mobile handset and hands-free kit in the car has shown, however, that using hands-free kits is almost as dangerous as using a hand held phone. To see the full article, go to: [www.nbr.co.nz](http://www.nbr.co.nz)

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