

Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers March 21, 2005

NETS Feature

New Safety website

Michigan NETS encourages you to bookmark a new website sponsored by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration entitled, "Safer Car," located at www.safercar.gov. The website has many traffic safety resources and includes information on three key areas including: Equipment and Safety; Five Star Crash Test and Rollover Ratings; and Defects and Recalls. Please refer to this website often for up to date information regarding your fleet safety program and other key information you can share with your workforce.

National Alcohol Screening Day And The Workplace

Has an employee's off-the-clock drinking affected his at work performance the next day? Has an employee's excessive drinking at work-related functions become a risk for your organization? Have you ever suspected an employee used sick leave to recover from a late-night hangover?

.....more: <http://www.nationalalcoholcreeningday.org/events/nasd/index.htm>

Latest Traffic Safety News

The Weather Channel Expands Coverage To Traffic

The Weather Channel, one of the nation's leading sources for weather information, announced its selection of Traffic Pulse to provide the delivery of real-time traffic information across The Weather Channel platforms including: television, web, and desktop applications. The implementation is expected to begin in May 2005. A service of Traffic.com, Traffic Pulse uses digital roadside sensor data collection resources and is able to provide lane-by-lane traffic information, including average speed, volume, and even type of vehicle. Read the full article at http://biz.yahoo.com/prnews/050308/cltu059_1.html

Drivers, Lawmakers Face A Traffic Jam Of Distractions

Since New York passed the nation's first statewide law banning handheld cell phones while driving four years ago, other states and communities have followed suit. But as new research suggests it is the actual conversation itself that poses the greatest distraction, and not the act of dialing or holding the cell phone. Many legislators are questioning the effectiveness and the feasibility of creating similar legislation that targets such specific technologies. Drivers today are inundated with distractions from dashboard navigational systems to watching movies and television while driving. To curb these distractions and the future use of similar technologies, lawmakers are creating laws that are worded more broadly to address new behaviors. For more information visit

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/03/03/technology/circuits/03laws.html?ex=1267592400&en=386e3a5f4c51e726&ei=5090&partner=rssuserland>

AAA Calls On EPA To Overhaul Fuel-Economy Tests

According to recent road tests conducted by the AAA Motor Club, many cars and trucks fall short of their government fuel-economy ratings. Now the organization is calling on the U.S. Environmental

Protection Agency (EPA) to overhaul its gas-mileage tests. Fuel-economy numbers posted on new vehicles are generated by 30 year-old EPA tests that fail to factor in air conditioning and cold starting engines. They are also based on the assumption that the vehicle never exceeds 60 mph and never accelerates hard enough to hit 60 mph from a standstill in less than 18 seconds. Read the full article at http://www.usatoday.com/money/autos/2005-03-02-aaa-usat_x.htm

IIHS: Most Small Cars Earn Poor Ratings In Side-Impact Crashes

Most small car designs earned poor ratings in side-impact crash tests recently performed by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS). According to the results, 14 of the 16 small cars tested earned poor ratings and none of the vehicles tested earned a good rating. Option side airbags with head protection helped two vehicles earn the Institute's second highest rating of acceptable. During the test, a moving deformable barrier, shaped to simulate the front end of a pick-up truck or SUV, struck the driver side of a passenger vehicle at 31 mph. Read the release at http://www.iihs.org/news_releases/2005/pr030605.htm Read the article at http://money.cnn.com/2005/03/06/pf/autos/iihs_side_impact/index.htm

Microsoft Creates Intelligent Wake Up Call For Commuters

Microsoft has announced the development of an intelligent alarm clock that can check traffic reports throughout the night and then alert the driver. The clock is activated when users enter their home or workplace, and can identify how long a journey will take and alert or "wake up" its owner at the correct time. The clock is only a prototype, but according to Microsoft, the clock could be on shelves within years. Read the full article at <http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/news/articles/17090459?source=Evening%20Standard>

AARP Report Examines Federal Transportation Programs For Older Adults

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Research Policy Institute recently released a report that examines federal programs and activities designed to improve the mobility of the nation's elderly. The report also includes policy options for promoting mobility and safety for older adults. View the report at http://research.aarp.org/il/2004_17_transport.pdf

Report: Half Of Traffic Fatalities Occur On Rural Roads

According to a new report released by The Road Information Program (TRIP), a national nonprofit transportation research group, more than half—52 percent—of traffic fatalities in the United States between 1999 and 2003 occurred on rural, non-Interstate roads and highways, even though travel on these roads only accounted for 28 percent of the nation's travel during the same time period. Entitled "Growing Traffic in Rural America: Safety in America's Heartland," the study found that of the 42,301 people killed each year in traffic crashes during 1999 and 2003, an average of 22,127 traffic fatalities occurred on rural roads. Read the release at <http://www.tripnet.org/national/RuralRoadsPR030305.htm>

Report Reviews State Legislative Activity On Driver's Licenses, ID Cards

The National Council of State Legislatures (NCSL) has released a report that summarizes 2004 state legislative activity regarding driver's license policy including: lawful presence issues, licensing illegal immigrants, document integrity, license suspension and revocation, and medical limitations for elderly drivers. View the report at <http://www.ncsl.org/programs/transportation/DriverIDtranrev04.htm>

EDR Expected To Take Center Stage In Upcoming Court Case

The driver of a truck that collided with a police car and killed the officer who had stopped to assist a disabled vehicle is relying on his vehicle's event data recorder (EDR) to prove he was not speeding. Police allege that the driver was traveling at least 80 mph at the time of the crash, and have since charged him with vehicular homicide and aggravated assault. However, the driver and his defense



team claim that the EDR shows that the truck was traveling within the legal speed limit. Although the driver considers his EDR to be an invaluable witness, some say such devices are invasive to one's privacy prompting the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to propose that auto manufacturers include information about EDRs in owner's manuals for cars equipped with the technology. NHTSA also recommended that manufacturers install the devices in all vehicles beginning September 2008. Currently, it is estimated that 15 percent of the 270 million cars on the road in the United States contain some form of an EDR. Read the full article at http://news.com.com/Rocky%2Broad%2Bfor%2Bcar%2Bblack%2Bboxes/2009-1041_3-5604449.html?tag=nefd.lede

Motor Freight Carriers Assoc. Chief Opposes Changes To HOS Rules

According to the president of the Motor Freight Carriers Association, changes to the current hours-of-service (HOS) regulations for truck drivers could hurt both the trucking industry and the overall U.S. economy. Trucks haul 80 percent of freight in the United States and have a heavy impact on the economy. HOS rules dictate the maximum work and minimum rest periods for drivers. New rules took effect January 2004, but the federal court vacated the rules because the driver's health wasn't considered.

March 28 – April 3 Is National Sleep Awareness Week

National Sleep Awareness Week (NSAW) will take place on March 28 – April 3, 2005. Sponsored by the National Sleep Foundation, the campaign coincides with the beginning of Daylight Saving Time, when clocks are moved forward one hour in many parts of the country at 2:00 a.m. on the first Sunday in April and millions of people risk losing an hour of sleep. To learn more about participating in the campaign visit http://www.sleepfoundation.org/features/NSAW_2005.cfm

“Special Enforcement Week” Targets Child Passenger Safety

This April, SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A will recognize “Special Enforcement Week,” when officers will increase efforts to watch for children who are not properly restrained. For more information and to find out if a child is ready to wear a seat belt visit <http://www.carseat.org>

Report Analyzes The Affects Of Shift Work On Safety

A new report reviews the published literature on shift work and safety in relation to the risk of accidents or injuries. Three trends were discovered:

Risk is higher on the night shift, and to a lesser extent the afternoon shift, than on the morning shift

Risk increases over a span of shifts, especially if they are night shifts

Risk increases with increasing shift length over eight hours.

The report also discusses the design for safer shift systems.

Source: National Institute of Industrial Health Authors: S. Folkard, D.A. Lombardi, P.T. Tucker

MADD Recommends Six Steps To Combat Alcohol Impaired Driving

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) has released a new report supporting law enforcement's efforts to stop alcohol impaired driving and reduce the number of alcohol-related fatalities. MADD issued six recommendations for law enforcement agencies, legislators, state officials, and highway safety groups. View the six recommendations and read the release at <http://www.madd.org/news/1,1056,9318,00.html>

Study Aims To Reduce DUI Among U.S. College Students

In the first study of its kind, researchers at San Diego State University used environmental approaches to prevent driving under the influence (DUI) on college campuses. Similar approaches have been

effective in reducing DUI at the community level. In the study, students were exposed to DUI prevention interventions that included a social marketing campaign, a media advocacy campaign, and increased law enforcement. Researchers then surveyed the participating students and found that self-reported DUI decreased significantly from pre to post intervention measures.

Source: Addiction Authors: J.D. Clapp, M. Johnson, R.B. Voas, J.E. Lange, A Shillington, C. Russell.

News from USDOT

More Motorists Than Ever Using Cell Phones While Driving

A new survey released by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) found that more motorists than ever are using cell phones while driving. Among the findings, the survey found that 8 percent of drivers, or 1.2 million people, used hand-held or hands-free cell phones during daylight hours last year, a 50 percent increase since 2002 and a 100 percent increase in four years. For more information visit http://www.usatoday.com/news/bythenumbers/2005-03-02-cell-use-behind-wheel_x.htm and <http://www.detnews.com/2005/autosinsider/0503/02/autos-105380.htm> View the survey results at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/pdf/nrd-30/NCSA/RNotes/2005/809847.pdf>

FHWA, NHTSA Release New Guidelines On Red-Light Cameras

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and NHTSA have released an updated version of its red-light camera operational guide. The new guidelines are designed to foster initiatives to improve intersection safety by reducing red-light running crashes. For more information visit <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/intersections/>

Work-Life

USA Today Report Finds Deadly Teen Crashes Show A Pattern

USA Today recently examined all the deadly crashes involving 16 to 19 year old drivers during 2003. About 3,500 teens were killed in teen-driven vehicles that year, making it the leading cause of death among teens. According to the article, the South proved to be the deadliest region and 16-year-old drivers were the riskiest of all. USA Today also found that driving with passengers and nighttime driving increases a teen driver's crash risk. Speed and failure to wear seat belts also were found to contribute to teen roadway fatalities. These behaviors could be explained by new medical research that found that the part of the brain weighing risks and controlling impulsive behavior is not fully developed until about the age of 25. Experts expect the death toll to swell in coming years as a record 17.5 million teens will be eligible to drive by the end of the decade. Read the full article at http://www.usatoday.com/money/autos/2005-02-28-teen-drive-cover-usat_x.htm

Choosing A Safe Car For Teen Drivers

Choosing a vehicle for a teen driver has drawn a great deal of attention recently, as highway safety officials seek ways to reduce the teen driver death toll. According to a recent article in USA Today, traffic safety researchers and experts recommend parents avoid SUVs and lightweight cars and trucks when it comes to choosing a car for their teen driver. Instead, they recommend larger vehicles that earn a four or five star rating from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), weigh at least 3,300 pounds and come equipped with modern safety features including antilock brakes,

airbags, and side curtain airbags. Read the full article at
http://www.usatoday.com/money/autos/2005-03-02-teens-cars-what-drive-usat_x.htm

International Traffic Safety News:

UK Drivers Consider Returning To The Days Of Company Cars

A crack down by UK employers on the type of private vehicles that can be used for business purposes could cause a surge of employees to request moving back to company cars. Employees are encountering a number of restrictions when it comes to using and choosing private cars for business-related travel. Some of these restrictions include having a minimum number of doors, age limits, business mileage limits, and being subjected to wide-ranging checks to determine that the vehicle is "suitable for purpose."

New UK Law Requires Delivery Drivers To Buckle Up

UK delivery fleets should be advising their employee drivers to buckle up following a new seat belt law that requires delivery drivers to wear their seat belts if traveling more than 50 meters in between deliveries. The Department for Transport estimates that if seat belts were compulsory for all delivery vehicles, it could prevent 20 deaths, 240 serious casualties and 1,000 slight injuries every year.

New UK Strategy Aims To Reduce Motorcycle Crashes

A new UK road safety strategy will focus on motorcycle safety and the need for better training among riders to reduce the number of rider deaths, including those among business riders. Organized by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) and based on the recommendations of the Advisory Group on Motorcycling, the overall goals of the campaign are to promote motorcycling as a recognized mode of transportation and reduce the number of deaths on Britain's roads.

Road Charging Expected To Help Improve Ailing UK Roadways

A new study published by the Royal Academy of Engineering suggests that charging motorists to use roads will be key in improving the UK's ailing roadway system. While it is estimated that fleets will be the hardest hit financially by distance-charging plans, some road experts believe that if the money is spent on improving roads, company motorists could benefit from quicker and hassle-free journeys. It is estimated that congestion costs the UK £15 billion a year and is expected to double over the next decade. However, another independent study estimates that a national charging scheme could raise £16 billion a year.

German Scientists Make Sense Of Autobahn Traffic

Instead of being a high-speed automotive paradise, Germany's autobahn is more often reminiscent of a parking lot. Using the autobahn as its sample, German scientists are hoping to explain the phenomenon behind stop-and-go traffic with physics and game theory. Researchers say that approximately 80 percent of traffic jams occur because there are simply too many people on the same part of the road at the same time. Scientists have then compared the traffic to physical particles, claiming that as long as there is enough space, autos move freely like a gas. However, if pressure is increased, autos flow like a liquid and with greater pressure, they freeze. Read the full article at <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,1564,1512527,00.html>

4.1 Million Canadian Drivers Admit to Nodding Off Behind The Wheel

According to new findings from the 4th annual Road Safety Monitor (RSM) released by the Traffic Injury Research Foundation (TIRF), 4.1 million Canadians admit to nodding off or falling asleep at the wheel at least once in the past 12 months. Despite this high figure, the survey of 1,200 Canadians also showed that only 57 percent of respondents believe this is a serious road safety issue. View the



survey results at

<http://trafficinjuryresearch.com/whatNew/whatNew.cfm?intNewsID=149&intContactID=3>

New Swedish Report Addresses Injury Risk

A new report by the Swedish National Road and Transport Research Institute addresses a person's risk of injury in relation to speeding, seat belt use, and alcohol impaired driving. The Institute reports that if citizens complied with laws related to these three measures, the number of persons killed would be reduced by almost 50 percent. In Sweden, the largest traffic safety problem is speeding, resulting in 150-200 deaths per year. Improper use of seat belts and alcohol impaired driving result in 50-100 deaths each year. To view the report visit

http://62.119.60.67/templates/Report_____2797.aspx?reportid=4050