



Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers April 23, 2007

Global Road Safety Week Is April 23-29

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), road safety is a neglected but growing public health and development issue. Each year worldwide, nearly 1.2 million people are killed in road accidents and millions more are injured or disabled, WHO statistics show. WHO estimates that 85 percent of traffic deaths and injuries occur in low-income and middle-income countries. The costs are enormous -- between \$64.5 billion and \$100 billion worldwide. To draw attention to the importance of road safety, the United Nations has designated Global Road Safety Week, which will be observed for the first time April 23-29. The theme will be "young road users" because young people constitute a major group at risk of death, injury and disability on the road. The goal is to raise awareness about the societal impact of road traffic deaths and injuries and to promote injury prevention measures, such as wearing helmets, using seat belts, preventing drunk driving and speeding, and improving infrastructure. For further information on the week, visit: <http://www.who.int/roadsafety/week/en/>

UPS Awarded "Green Cross for Safety"

UPS was formally presented the Green Cross for Safety Medal by the National Safety Council at a ceremony in the nation's capital on April 11. The award recognizes organizations and their leaders for outstanding achievements in safety and health, community service and responsible citizenship. "Safety at UPS is not about any one person; it's about 427,000 of the best people in the business," said UPS Chairman and CEO Mike Eskew in accepting the award. UPS invests more than \$400 million a year in training programs, including 26 formal UPS safety-training courses taught in more than 1,700 facilities. UPS employees receive more than 1.3 million hours of safety-related training annually. For further information, visit: http://ups.com/pressroom/us/press_releases/press_release/0_0_4880.00.html

Insurance Institute Rates Vehicles For Rear-Crash Protection

The latest evaluation of occupant protection in rear-end collisions by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) found that the seat/head restraints in more than 60 percent of car models fall short of current state-of-the-art protection from neck injury or whiplash. Rear-end collisions are frequent, and neck injuries are the most common injuries reported in automobile crashes accounting for 2 million insurance claims each year. Although these injuries aren't typically life threatening, they can be painful and debilitating. The Institute stress that head restraints aren't just headrests, they're important safety features. For further information, visit: <http://www.iihs.org/news/rss/pr040507.html>

Communication Between Cars and Roads Almost A Reality

Wouldn't it be nice if your car warned you to slow down before you hit another car? That could happen in the next six or seven years as automakers and transportation officials test communication systems to enable roads to talk to cars, cars to talk to other cars and officials will glean valuable traffic information from the electronic chitchat. The technology we are working on now will allow two-way communications which will create a national network of talking cars to reduce traffic fatalities, congestion and pollution. The system is based around roadside sensors, about the size of large briefcases that communicate with cigarette pack-sized computers outfitted on vehicles. A FL DOT official says, "We could see this system operational by 2012 and then who knows where the private market will take it." Source: Daytona Beach News-Journal, April 2, 2007



Auto Expert Claims Dangerous Drivers In US Need Tougher Licensing Process

According to article author, John McCormick, "our country's collective driving ability is a disgrace, and a dangerous one at that. Our poor driving skills are a national embarrassment made worse by the fact that so much could be done to mitigate the problem. Above all what we need is a driving test worthy of the name, and driver training to go with it. What we have today in the way of a test is a farce, a process so simple that a 9-year old could probably pass, if he or she could reach the controls." McCormick describes the licensing process in Europe that is expensive, more extensive and demanding, involving lengthy training and testing, and comprehensive written and driving exams. Source: Detroit News, March 28, 2007

ATRI Releases Study Results On Truck Speed Governors

The American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI) released the initial analysis of its industry survey on speed governor use, as part of a larger year-long ATRI initiative to analyze the potential safety impacts of speed and speed differentials on trucking safety and operations. The initial results show that, for those carrier respondents using truck speed governors (69.0%), the average speed setting is 69 mph. The majority of carriers use the posted speed limits as the determining factor in setting governor speed. Survey respondents also detailed variations in governor speed settings that may be allowed based on specific driver criteria, such as accident-free miles. To download the preliminary analysis report on the survey findings, visit: <http://www.atri-online.org/news/Initial%20Findings%20Speed%20Governor%20Use%20for%20website.html>

New Traffic Model Can Predict Highway Crashes

Researchers at Ohio State University have developed computer-modeling software that pinpoints where and when crashes happen, flagging particularly dangerous stretches of highway. The model can identify an area that has a higher risk than another at a specific time of having a specific type of crash so that a prediction can be made about where and when there are going to be higher risks of crashes. Currently, the model is being used by the Ohio State Highway Patrol to monitor roadways and position troopers. Eventually, the researchers would like to feed the data to drivers through mobile devices or portable navigation systems. The group also plans to study the reasons a certain roadway is more prone to alcohol-related crashes or having drivers who speed. Source: Technology Review, April 2, 2007

Impact Of Behavior-Based Safety Techniques On Commercial Motor Vehicle Drivers

The newly released TRB report, Impact of Behavior-Based Safety Techniques on Commercial Motor Vehicle Drivers explores various strategies designed to increase safety-related driving behaviors and decrease at-risk driving behaviors of commercial motor vehicle drivers. The report also examines innovative and successful behavior-based safety practices in commercial vehicle settings. To download the pdf file, visit: http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/ctbssp/ctbssp_syn_11.pdf

GM To Evaluate Future Of Rear-Wheel-Drive Vehicles

General Motors is evaluating its future lineup of rear-wheel-drive vehicles in light of stricter fuel economy standards from the federal government. Rear-wheel-drive vehicles use more gasoline because they are heavier and typically used for high-performance driving. GM product chief Bob Lutz, a vocal critic of a proposal to raise corporate average fuel economy standards by 4 percent annually to average 34 miles per gallon by 2017, says the new requirement, up from 27.5 miles per gallon today, could add \$5,000 to the average cost of a vehicle. Lutz said GM has put a hold on future rear-wheel-drive vehicles. GM has two rear-drive cars in the works: the Chevrolet Camaro sports coupe due in 2008 and a replacement for the Chevrolet Impala sedan due in 2009. "It's too late to stop Camaro, but anything after that is questionable or on the bubble," said Lutz. Source: Reuters, April 12, 2007



Drunk Driving Efforts Aimed At Latinos

North Carolina is trying to combat a major problem among young Hispanic men drawn to the state by plentiful jobs: drunken-driving rates two to three times as high as those of other groups. North Carolina is one of several states trying to address the disparity in highway death rates through community outreach and education efforts to increase awareness of driving laws and safety issues. The North Carolina effort, called "Nuestra Seguridad," includes a media campaign, DWI checkpoints and publishing the names of Latinos arrested on drunken-driving charges in Spanish-language newspapers. "One of the things we felt we needed to address specifically was the disproportionate number of crashes and DWI crashes that involved our Hispanic population," says Darrell Jernigan, director of the Governor's Highway Safety Program. For further information, visit: http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2007-04-10-hispanic-dui_N.htm Source: USA Today, April 10, 2007

WA State Considers Bill Requiring Public Safety/Health Messages Broadcast In Multiple Languages

A Washington State legislator introduced a bill to require state agencies to provide public notices about an imminent or emergent public health, safety or welfare risk in languages other than English when a significant segment of residents have limited proficiency in English. Without multiple language formats, many residents are effectually left uninformed about risks to life and property. As an example, severe weather/roadway conditions are a hazard and this public safety information should be made available in multiple languages, so that more people will understand the dangers involved. Source: Seattle Post-Intelligencer, April 2, 2007

Driver Distraction

Growing Number Of In-Vehicle Accessories Drive Us To Distraction

The proliferation of onboard technology – now a \$30 billion industry – is alarming car-safety advocates and researchers, who remind us that the devices arrive with no independent evaluation of the potential hazards. According to David Strayer, a University of Utah professor who researches driver distraction, "We're seeing an explosion of gadgets in the car. Cell phones are the tip of the iceberg." Even though the gadgets come with warnings about their use while driving, and some are designed to be inoperable when the vehicle is in motion, Strayer and others wonder about the wisdom of adding ever more attention-grabbers. "When a drug manufacturer produces a new drug, they have to prove, with clinical trials, that it is safe," Strayer said. "Shouldn't there be some oversight so that things that are put into vehicles are shown first to do no harm?" Earlier this year, the nonprofit Center for Auto Safety petitioned federal transit-safety officials to clamp down on "telematics," specifically built-in phones. "We feel like it's now or never," said Clarence Ditlow, the center's executive director. Source: The San Diego Union-Tribune, April 1, 2007

Study Compares Cell Phone Use In 3 Locations

According to Speed Measurement Laboratories (SML) in Fort Worth, cell phones are the third-largest cause of accidents and deaths on the nation's highways, behind driving under the influence and speeding. SML assessed 7,900 drivers' cell phone use in Albuquerque, which allows only hands-free phones, and Denver and the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex, where there is no such requirement to determine what percentage of drivers were talking on their cell phones while driving. SML reported finding no difference between accident causation of hand held or hands free cell phone use. For further information, visit: http://www.speedlabs.com/published_research.html



Information Highway Has Merged Onto Real Highway

The first cars with Internet service are beginning to appear. The wireless modem made by startup company AutoNet, an Internet Service Provider for cars is located in the trunk. It's a router that creates a network so that everyone in the vehicle can be online at the same time. The service is by subscription and according to Sterling Pratz of AutoNet, "Now, instead of asking, "Are we there yet?", kids will ask, Are we on yet?" Source: KGO-TV, April 8, 2007

Dash Navigation™ Plans To Recruit 2,000 Drivers To "Road Test" Dash Express

Dash Express™ is the first Internet-connected automotive GPS. The company recently completed a successful six-month field trial in the San Francisco Bay Area. Now, Dash is crisscrossing the country to actively engage thousands of consumers in the process in preparation for a national commercial launch this fall. Dash is looking for heavy commuters and mobile gadget enthusiasts to be the first to test drive the Dash Express. For further information, visit: www.dash.net

Living Room Entertainment In Your Car

BMW is taking the TV out of the living room and onto the road with a new multimedia entertainment system that combines all the elements of a TiVo crossed with an Apple TV, a satellite box and a multimedia cell phone. After selecting a video or a song, a motorist can quickly flip back to the navigation system or change channels on the radio. The technology is described as, "a telematics component that extends the entertainment experience." According to BMWs' Vogel, "Consumers like to bring whatever personal devices they already have with their personal content on them wherever they go." It may be several years before the entire system sees commercial application due to licensing and trademark technicalities. Vogel said that BMW will roll out the new multimedia options incrementally: This year it's iPod connectivity; next year it might be Wi-Fi synchronization with a home computer. Source: Wired, April 6, 2007

News from the USDOT

U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Mary E. Peters Announces A Substantial Life-Saving Technology For All New Passenger Vehicles

In a move that could ultimately save up to 10,000 lives each year on U.S. roadways U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary E. Peters and National Highway Traffic Safety Administrator Nicole R. Nason announced plans to make new crash prevention technology standard equipment on every new passenger vehicle sold in America by 2012. The final rule will require all manufacturers to begin equipping passenger vehicles with ESC starting with model year 2009, and to have the feature available as standard equipment on all new passenger vehicles by the 2012 model year (September 2011). ESC uses automatic computer controlled braking to keep drivers from losing control on slippery roads or in emergency maneuvers, in many cases preventing deadly rollovers from occurring. The agency estimates ESC will save between 5,300 and 9,600 lives annually and prevent between 168,000 and 238,000 injuries. The estimated average cost of ESC is approximately \$111 per vehicle, assuming the model already features ABS brakes. "This technology will save thousands of lives. Like airbags and seat belts, ten years down the road we will look back at the new ESC technology and wonder how we ever drove a car without it." Secretary Peters said. A copy of the final regulation can be obtained at <http://www.safercar.gov/esc/Rule.pdf> and information on the ESC technology can be found at: <http://nhtsa.gov/portal/site/nhtsa/menuitem.012c081c5966f0ca3253ab10cba046a0/>



Work-Home

AIG Auto Insurance Launches GPS Based Teen Driver Pilot Program

AIG Auto Insurance announced the AIG Teen GPS Program for auto insurance policyholders with teen drivers. The program will initially be piloted in Arizona, Illinois, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Washington, and uses GPS technology to allow parents of teen drivers to monitor the location of the teen's car and driving. After installing a small GPS unit, parents can instantly determine the exact location of the teen's car via the Web or any phone. Additionally, the AIG Teen GPS Program will automatically send the parent an e-mail and/or text message if the teen's car exceeds pre-defined speed limits or is driven too far from a pre-defined location (home, school, work, etc.). For further information, visit:

http://home.businesswire.com/portal/site/google/index.jsp?ndmViewId=news_view&newsId=20070409005004&newsLang=en

International Traffic Safety News

Vietnam TV Launches Show On Traffic Safety

Viet Nam Television plans to launch a show about traffic safety in an attempt to cut down on crashes that kill some 13,000 Vietnamese annually. The program, The Traffic Blog, scheduled to debut on April 1, is geared towards teenagers and young adults and will offer educational and useful information in a gentler style than hard news. The program's producers were looking to create a dialogue with viewers and welcomed traffic-related clips from across the country. According to statistics from the National Committee for Traffic Safety, nearly 15,000 traffic accidents were reported in Viet Nam last year. Some 13,000 people died in those crashes and another 11,000 were injured. Road crashes accounted for 94 per cent of all accidents, followed by those on railways and waterways. The accidents, the committee said, were caused by shoddy infrastructure, unsafe vehicles and ignorance of safety rules. Source: Vietnam News Agency

UK Government Plans Drink Driving Crackdown

Following Government research showing an alarming increase in drink drive deaths, UK drivers may face random breath tests. Research suggests that many drivers continue to exceed blood alcohol limits, feeling that they are able to drive safely and that the chances of being caught are slim. Recent Department for Transport data dispels these myths, showing that the number of people who have died in drink-drive crashes has soared by a fifth in just seven years in the UK, with 17% of road deaths now involving a driver over the legal limit for alcohol. This has led to calls from road safety experts for tougher enforcement, through random breath testing and a reduction in the drink-drive limit from 80mg to 50mg. Source: Interactive Driving Systems

Transport Truck Driver Recognized by ICBC For Seat Belt Use

A local transport truck driver has been recognized by the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) with the Living Proof Award that acknowledges individuals whose lives were saved due to seat belt use. Earlier this year Mr. Anderson, rounded a corner to come face to face with a rockslide. With a rock wall on one side and the river on the other, Anderson had no choice but to collide cab-first with a massive boulder. He survived the potentially-fatal crash without serious injury. ICBC loss prevention coordinator Dave Turko says that the number of truckers who buckle up is significantly lower than the national average. He hopes that Anderson's experience serves as a positive example for those in the commercial trucking industry about the importance of strapping in.

Source: Northern View (Prince Rupert, British Columbia, Canada), April 11, 2007 via ATA



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Study Finds New-Car Smell Not Toxic

New-car smell is apparently non-toxic, although it might exacerbate allergies, new research suggests, according to the Web site www.livescience.com. The chemical compounds responsible for the characteristic aroma in new cars are known as volatile organic compounds that are regularly emitted from plastics, synthetic fabrics, upholstery, carpets, adhesives, paints, cleaning materials, and other sources. Scientists detailed their findings in the Apr. 1 issue of the journal Environmental Science & Technology. For further information, visit:

http://www.livescience.com/humanbiology/070406_newcar_smell.html

Good News For Drivers Who Ask About Arrival Times

Drivers sitting in traffic queues on Scotland's most congested motorways will soon be told how long their wait will last, thanks to a planned new network of 400 cameras that will track vehicle number plates. Exact journey times to major junctions will be displayed on electronic message signs, using information on traffic speeds fed from the cameras, to be sited at 200 locations across the country. The system will be extended across the motorway and trunk road network over the next five years, as part of an £8 million annual increase in traffic information spending by the Executive's Transport Scotland agency. Source: The Scotsman, April 9, 2007