



Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers August 1, 2007

Announcing the 2007 Drive Safely Work Week Campaign

Download Free Materials today and start planning your campaign!

The graphic is a rectangular banner with a white background and a blue border. On the left side, there is a logo for Drive Safely Work Week showing two hands holding a steering wheel. Below the logo, the text reads "October 1-5, 2007". In the center, the main message is "Take Charge of YOUR Driving Behavior" and "Reduce YOUR Crash Risk". On the right side, there is a blue vertical panel with the heading "Avoid High-Risk Driving Mistakes" and a list of five items: 1. Being Inattentive, 2. Following Too Closely, 3. Traveling at Improper Speeds, 4. Ignoring Traffic Signs & Signals, and 5. Backing Up Unsafely.

Michigan News

Invitation to attend the 2007 Wake Up, Michigan! Symposium

On behalf of the many sponsors of the 2007 Wake Up, Michigan! Symposium, you are cordially invited to attend this landmark statewide conference and national discussion on drowsy driving issues taking place on Thursday, September 20, 2007 at Steelcase Town Hall in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The consequences of insufficient sleep can be costly. Find out what happens when your employees, fellow drivers, and law enforcement officers don't get enough zzzzz's. Sessions will focus on the importance of sleep, drowsy driving dangers, legal and legislative impact of drowsy driving, fatigue from an officer's point of view, and employer risks and return on investment.

The following link will provide you with a registration form and other valuable information regarding this Symposium:

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/michnets/Wake_Up_Michigan_Symposium_registration_form_201909_7.pdf

Latest Traffic Safety News

U.S. Traffic Fatalities Fall in 2006, but Alcohol-Related Deaths Rise

Although the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports 2 percent fewer traffic fatalities in 2006, traffic deaths involving alcohol rose slightly over 2005. In 2006, there were 42,642 fatalities, 868 fewer than in 2005. Of those traffic deaths, 15,121 involved a driver, motorcycle operator, pedestrian or cyclist with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 or higher. The figure for



2005 is 15,102. "There is a personal story behind these statistics and for every alcohol related fatality, the family left behind is shattered forever," NHTSA Administrator Nicole Nason said. She also said drunk driving enforcement will continue to be a top priority for the Department of Transportation. For the full report, go to <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/810791.PDF>

Travelers Report Wasting Time in Traffic While on the Road for Work

Business travelers who rent cars lose about 1 ½ hours per trip in traffic, getting lost and paying tolls, according to an Avis survey. Of those who responded to the survey, 80 percent said they spend 44 minutes on average stuck in traffic over a three-day business trip. Half said they lose another 30 minutes getting lost and 12 minutes waiting in line to pay tolls. "Any lost time on the road is a productivity issue for companies," a National Business Travel Association spokesman said. "When employees are on the road, companies want them working—not sitting in traffic." Avis and other rental car companies also rent navigational equipment and electronic toll-collection devices to cut down on lost productivity. For more information, go to http://www.usatoday.com/travel/news/2007-07-24-lost-time_N.htm Source: USA Today, July 24, 2007

Most Crashes in Workers' Compensation Claims Involve 1 Occupant

Reinsurer Willis Re recently conducted research to determine workers' compensation insurers' exposure to vehicle crashes with more than one worker in the car. Researchers found that most of workers' compensation vehicle crashes involve a single occupant, and those with more than eight occupants are rare. They also found crashes have a very high ratio of fatality to permanent total injuries, which are very expensive. Safety advances could lead to more permanent total injuries, increasing the economic risk to workers' compensation carriers. Source: Automotive Fleet, July 24, 2007

National Impaired Driving Crackdown During Labor Day Holiday

NHTSA is coordinating a National Impaired Driving High Visibility Enforcement Crackdown during the Labor Day holiday. The Crackdown will run from August 17 through September 3. NHTSA will support law enforcement crackdown activities with an \$11 million paid advertising campaign, using the theme "Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest." More than 11,000 law enforcement agencies are expected to participate. Because the majority of alcohol-related traffic deaths in this country occur in rural areas, NHTSA is especially interested in increased participation among small and mid-sized law enforcement agencies in these areas. There is a Law Enforcement Action Kit; these resources are available at: <http://www.stopimpaireddriving.org/tools-campaignheadquarters-leak.htm>.

Leaders Want To Deploy DSRC Early To Get Real-World Experience

Some of the major players in developing Dedicated Short-Range Communications (DSRC) are eager to start rolling out the product before the infrastructure is final, according to a report from ABI Research. DSRC will be used for intersection collision avoidance, advanced warning systems and real-time traffic information. Local communities also are looking forward for the rollout to please their residents. The next challenge will be to integrate DSRC with Wi-Fi and cellular based services so they are seamless for road users. For more information, go to <http://www.theautochannel.com/news/2007/07/12/054818.html>. Source: The Auto Channel, July 12, 2007

HBO ADDICTION Series

Recently, HBO aired a 14-part series on "ADDICTION." Two of the episodes – Saturday Night in a Dallas ER and South Boston Drug Court - are of particular relevance to impaired driving. To view these episodes, go to <http://www.hbo.com/addiction/thefilm/>



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Smart Car Tries to Emphasize Safety Despite its Size

The fuel-efficient, two-seat Smart car is making its debut in the United States in early 2008. The fortwo model gets 40 miles per gallon, and its tiny size (8.8 feet long and 1,700 pounds) makes it one of the smallest cars on the road. Because it's practically half a size of a Ford Explorer, Daimler Chrysler AG is trying to convince consumers they'll be safe driving the Smart car in a sea of SUVs. The Smart car comes with a "safety cell" frame, anti-lock brakes, collapsible steering column, side and knee air bags and safety belts that sense motion changes. "Even with modern safety features like multiple air bags, people in small, light cars are always at a disadvantage in crashes," said Russ Rader of the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. The Smart car has not been crash tested yet in the United States, but a previous version was tested in Europe in 2000 and received three out of five stars. U.S. test results are expected to be released in the fall. For more information, go to

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/19699245/> Source: The Associated Press, July 11, 2007

Report Ranks States on Road Performance

More than half of U.S. urban Interstates are congested and traffic fatalities are up slightly, but bridge and road surface conditions have improved, according to the Reason Foundation's annual highway performance report. The study measures state-owned highways and roads from 1984 to 2005 in 12 categories to rank the states. Fatality rates vary from state to state: Massachusetts reported the lowest rate, while Montana's was the highest. The national average was 1.453 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, up slightly from 2004. The good news is that the number of roads reported in "poor condition" has dropped significantly. Overall, North Dakota and South Carolina took the top spots, and New Jersey was at the bottom of the list for cost-effectiveness. For more information, go to

<http://www.reason.org/ps360>

Automakers Take Cue from iPhone When Designing Interiors

Apple's iPhone might have changed the way cell phones are made, but it also will change the way automobile interiors are designed. Because auto manufacturers are eager to make their interiors more appealing to consumers, they will adopt solutions to meet the needs of younger customers who have the latest gadgets. New vehicles will include features such as iPod interface adaptors, Bluetooth and USB ports. Navigation screens connect to the Internet, and most drivers will use a wireless phone-based system rather than one that's built into the car. The challenge will be to integrate the new features and make sure they're easy to use. Tech-savvy consumers are also style conscious, so interiors will become more sophisticated as well. For more information, go to

http://www.thecarconnection.com/pf/Auto_News/Daily_Auto_News/Will_iPhone_Influence_Car_Design.S173.A12636.html Source: The Car Connection, July 16, 2007

Recent Ignition Interlock Legislation Part of MADD's New Campaign

The Arizona and Illinois legislatures recently passed laws mandating alcohol ignition interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers, making Mothers Against Drunk Driving's (MADD) Campaign to Eliminate Drunk Driving one step closer to reality. In addition to calling for states to require ignition interlocks, MADD is asking for congressional hearings and lobbying for increased focus on the issue of drunk driving. Other campaign elements include high-visibility enforcement, development of advanced vehicle technologies and grassroots support. Drunk driving still is a problem in the United States: As overall traffic deaths fell 0.3 percent in 2006, fatalities involving a driver with a blood alcohol content of .08 or higher rose 3 percent. New Mexico was the first state to mandate ignition interlocks, devices that will not allow the car to start unless the driver blows below a pre-set BAC. Studies show that interlocks are about 90 percent effective in keeping offenders from committing the crime again. Alcohol-related injury crashes dropped 20 percent in New Mexico the first year interlocks were mandated for convicted drunk drivers. For more information, go to <http://www.madd.org/news/11820>



Source: MADD, June 21, 2007

Campaign Pushes Motorists to Move Over for Law Enforcement Officers

The new "Move Over, America" public awareness campaign is the first nationally coordinated effort to inform citizens about how "move over" laws protect police officers. Mason Dixon Polling & Research found that 71 percent of Americans have not heard of "move over" laws, though 40 states have passed laws mandating motorists to change lanes to give officers safe clearance. According to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, more than 150 law enforcement officers have been killed after being struck by vehicles on U.S. highways since 1997. For more information, go to <http://www.moveoveramerica.com>

Adults with ADHD Experience More Anger Behind the Wheel

A new study examines whether adults with ADHD experience more anger when driving. Adults with ADHD completed measures of driving anger, driving anger expression, angry thoughts while driving and aggressive and crash-related behavior. Those results were compared to two non-ADHD groups. ADHD participants reported more driving anger and using their vehicles to express themselves aggressively. The ADHD drivers rated themselves as riskier and unsafe drivers and experienced more losses of concentration and control of the vehicle than the other groups.

8 Percent of Workers Report Recent Illegal Drug Use

More workers today than in 1994 report using illegal drugs, according to annual surveys from 2002, 2003 and 2004 by the Health and Human Services Department's Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration. About one in 12, or 8.2 percent, of employees admitted using drugs in the past month. Most of the employees work full time, and the highest incidents of drug use happened in the restaurant and construction industries. Employee drug testing increased to about 50 percent, but the number of treatment programs available to employees is declining. For more information, go to <http://archives.seattletimes.nwsource.com/cgi-bin/texis.cgi/web/vortex/display?slug=drugs16&date=20070716> Source: The Associated Press, July 16, 2007

Washington Uses Infra-Red Cameras to Inspect Commercial Motor Vehicles

Commercial vehicle inspectors in Washington are using infra-red cameras to help detect defects or dangerous problems in trucks' brakes and tires. The cameras measure heat given off by the parts, enabling inspectors to tell whether a tire is underinflated or if a brake failed. "It allows us to look at problems and take action on them before they become disasters," a Washington State Patrol trooper said. The cameras can catch problems standard inspections might miss. The infra-red camera will inspect more than 50,000 trucks this year. For more information, go to http://www.king5.com/localnews/north/stories/NW_072007WAB_road_cameras_KS.9526d812.html Source: KING 5 News, July 20, 2007

United States Falls Behind Other Countries in Traffic Fatalities

In 1970 the United States led the world in road safety but since has slipped behind other countries. The United States came in 42nd out of the 48 countries measured in the number of fatalities per capita. Countries that fared much better are Australia, Britain, France, Germany and Japan, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the International Transport Forum. When measured for fatalities per distance driven, the United States came in first in 1970 with the lowest death rate: it's now at No. 11. Some reasons for slipping in the ranks are inadequate driver training, a culture of freedom from legislation and not seeing traffic safety as a national priority. Other countries have stricter laws, better enforcement and more public transportation. The United States is the only country in the world with a secondary seat belt law. Experts agree the United States continues to lead the world in automotive design. For more information, go to <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/22/automobiles/22SAFETY.html?pagewanted=print>



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Source: The New York Times, July 21, 2007

States Keep Traffic Moving by Making Sure Roads Quickly Cleared

States and cities are launching aggressive programs to keep highways clear, because about a quarter of all congestion on U.S. highways is related to crashes, stalled vehicles or debris. The risk of a “secondary crash” becomes greater the longer it takes to clear the first crash. In Oregon, the state legislature passed a bill that requires drivers in minor crashes to move their vehicles off the road or get a \$180 fine. About half the states have similar laws. Houston launched a “Mobility Response Team,” non-officers who cruise the roads to look for anything that could slow down traffic. The Tennessee Department of Safety uses 69 trucks to cruise interstates in metro areas, providing gas to stranded motorists and guiding drivers around crashes. Programs like these aim to increase the reliability of commutes without adding highway capacity. For more information, go to http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2007-07-19-freeway-congestion_N.htm

Source: USA Today, July 19, 2007

Immediate License Suspensions Help Reduce Drunk Driving Crashes

Automatically suspending the licenses of drivers charged with drunk driving helps reduce alcohol-related crashes, according to a new study from the University of Florida College of Medicine. Researchers found that post-conviction laws, on the other hand, have no effect. They estimate that taking away licenses of anyone who fails a field sobriety test reduces alcohol-related fatalities by 5 percent and saves 800 lives a year. The study analyzed 26 years of crash data from 46 states with driver’s license suspension laws. Only nine states allow drivers to keep their licenses after they fail a field sobriety test. The study was published in the August 2007 issue of *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*. Source: Join Together, July 25, 2007

News from USDOT

Safety Focus Helps Reduce Truck Crash Fatalities by Almost 5 Percent

Fatalities in truck crashes in 2006 fell to 4,995 from 5,240 in 2005, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation. No single factor accounts for the 4.7 percent drop, but the industry’s safety mindset and increased safety belt use among drivers are possible reasons. “We’re very pleased with these numbers and, though we realize more needs to be done, it exemplifies a long-term effort on the part of law enforcement and carriers to improve highway safety,” said David Hugel, deputy administrator for the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. Increased roadside inspections and compliance reviews, tighter commercial driver’s license regulations and wider use of safety technologies all played a part in the decrease. Deaths among truck occupants rose 0.1 percent from 2005. Large-truck injuries fell by 15 percent. Source: Fleet Owner, July 25, 2007

NHTSA Keeps Requirement for Tire Pressure Warning Light

Tire Pressure Monitoring System (TPMS) warning lights must initiate a 60- to 90-second flashing sequence when an air pressure problem is found. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration decided to keep the requirement after the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers requested a second look.

FMCSA Meets to Provide Guidance on Commercial Driver Health Regulations

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration held a meeting on July 26 to talk about possible changes to the physical qualification regulations of commercial motor vehicle drivers. The Medical Review Board met to provide science-based guidance to establish realistic and responsible medical standards.



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Work-Home

Partial Motorcycle Helmet Laws Don't Protect Young Riders As Well As Universal Laws

Some states require only young motorcycle riders to wear a helmet, but a new study shows these laws are not as effective as universal helmet laws. The researchers found that universal helmet laws, which cover riders of all ages, are associated with fatality rates that are 31 percent lower among 15- to 20-year-old motorcyclists. Laws that only cover younger riders are statistically unrelated to a reduction of fatalities among the same age group. As more states move away from universal helmet laws, younger riders will become more at risk. Fortunately Michigan has a universal law!

Parents Can Look to Several Resources When Choosing a Child Safety Seat

All child safety seats on the market meet federal safety standards, but no single source provides rankings of the best seats. Several agencies offer information that could come in handy when deciding on a seat. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration posts information on its Web site about recalls and consumer complaints. The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia partnered with State Farm Insurance Co. to analyze crash data and agreed the best seat is one that fits the child, the vehicle and is easy to install each time. "Parents should pick a seat they will use every time," one expert said. "No matter how cute it is, if you don't use it, it's not going to protect your child." Children are safest in a rear-facing seat and should stay in one until at least age 1, but preferably as long as possible. Child safety seats should not move more than one inch from side to side, and experts prefer a five-point harness system. Parents should use a tether to anchor forward-facing seats.

Source: Chicago Tribune, July 15, 2007

Football Star Injured in Fall-Asleep Crash

Robert Marve, a former standout high-school quarterback signed to the University of Miami, was injured in a serious car crash in Florida. Marve's 18-year-old friend and teammate Jermaine McKenzie was driving a 2007 Dodge Charger when he fell asleep behind the wheel. The car was traveling at a high rate of speed when it entered the left median and hit a guard rail. McKenzie then woke up and overcorrected, flipping the car six times before it hit a tree. McKenzie fractured a vertebra in his neck, and another passenger was uninjured. Marve broke his wrist, dislocated his left ring finger and suffered a serious cut between his pinkie and ring fingers. Marve anticipates a long recovery and a red-shirt season. "I don't care [about not playing football this season]," Marve said. "All I want to do is heal and be functional on my own." For more information, go to

<http://sports.tbo.com/sports/MGBHV19A94F.html> Source: The Tampa Tribune, July 18, 2007

International Traffic Safety News

Most Drivers Don't Get Regular Eye Tests`

Only about a third of company drivers have eye tests every two years, according to Arval. Arval encourages companies to make sure drivers get the tests as part of their duty-of-care responsibility. "At the heart of this issue is communication from companies about the importance of regular eye tests and communication from employees to make their employers aware if their eyesight has deteriorated," Arval's head of market analysis said. If employees don't report to authorities that their eyesight has deteriorated since their license was issued, they could pay up to £1,000 in fines.

Source: FleetNewsNet, July 17, 2007



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Telematics Allow Insurers to Charge Drivers Based on Actual Use

Pay-as-you-drive coverage might be the next innovation in car insurance. Insurers would use telematics to track drivers' movements and bill them accordingly. By the end of the year, 5,000 vehicles will be equipped with black boxes to collect data for an 18-month pilot project. The black boxes will measure how far the car has been driven, the speed at which it traveled, when the trip took place and even what roads were traveled. The information is sent back to the insurer, where a computer calculates an itemized bill. The system could also use the information to suggest ways the driver can save money. For more information, go to http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/3574010.stm Source: BBC News

Traffic Deaths among Children Rise in United Kingdom

More children are dying on British roads. The Department of Transport reports that fatalities for children under 15 years old jumped nearly 20 percent from 2005 to 2006—from 141 to 169. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents called the numbers “appalling,” and Paul Smith of SafeSpeed said the Department of Transport must be held accountable. Source: FleetNewsNet, July 26, 2007

Long-Awaited Bill Allows for Easier Prosecution of Companies Involved in Fatal Crashes

After years of delays, Parliament passed a bill to make it easier to prosecute companies after fatal crashes. The corporate manslaughter and homicide bill will put renewed focus on the actions of senior management involved in any prosecution. The bill awaits royal assent. Detailed analysis of the new legislation will be provided to delegates at the Hit for Six Conference in September. Source: FleetNewsNet, July 24, 2007

IBM Developing Computers for Car-to-Car Communication

IBM is introducing artificial intelligence in vehicles with its “collaborative driving” system. Onboard computers would communicate wirelessly with each other and other systems embedded in the road. One application is using road sensors to make traffic lights more efficient. In India, coordination centers would ensure smooth flow of traffic by sensing traffic volume and controlling the duration of lights to match. With driver-assist technologies, vehicles would act as though they have reflexes. Voice-recognition systems would allow drivers to get directions through simple voice commands and answer calls with both hands on the wheel. Travelers would be notified by cell phone of delays or alternate routes. The goal of these innovations is to save fuel, ease congestion and reduce crashes. The systems are improving as the years pass, and it is likely they will become standard equipment on all new vehicles. For more information, go to <http://www.expresscomputeronline.com/20070723/edit01.shtml> and <http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/holnus/008200707271640.htm> Source: Express Computer, July 23, 2007 and The Hindu, July 27, 2007

Germany Tries To Cut Down Traffic Signs by Half

Traffic signs have become so rampant in Germany that the phenomenon has its own name—Schilderwald, or sign forest. To get rid of half of the country's 20 million traffic signs, Germany's ADAC automobile association has been combing the streets with municipal officials to point out unnecessary signs. Signs exist for nearly every possible situation, from toad crossing to dirty roads. In contrast, some Dutch villages have eliminated all traffic signs under the theory that drivers will be more attentive to their surroundings. One reason for Germany's sign mania is its ingrained culture for following rules. But the signs don't necessarily make drivers safer, as Germany ranked eight out of 21 for crash injuries. After a sign is deemed unnecessary, they are covered with yellow hoods and taken down after



a few weeks if no one complains. For more information, go to

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB118521616798775228.html?mod=googlenews_wsj

Source: The Wall Street Journal, July 25, 2007

Cameras, Sensors Give Vehicles Ability To See What Drivers Can't

Cameras and sensors will give future generations of cars the ability to "see" all around them. Forward-looking radar, rear-view infrared sensors and side-assist radar help cars recognize their surroundings and notice objects the driver misses. Not only will cameras capture objects, but they'll also be able to recognize traffic signs and display an appropriate warning to the driver. Volkswagen plans to design headlights in everyday cars that emit the correct amount of light for a given situation. The company is also using infrared cameras to recognize pedestrians and determine a collision avoidance strategy. For these new innovations to work, existing automotive electronics architecture must be modified to transport and process large amounts of information at high speeds. Manufacturers must also develop security systems that will protect the vehicles from threats. For more information, go to

<http://www.eetimes.com/news/semi/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=201002272> Source: EE Times, July 19, 2007