



Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers July 16, 2007

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

Web Sites Help Consumers Pick Safe Vehicles

Wearing safety belts and driving sober can help protect motorists from injury, but the cars they drive also play a role. Much of the credit for improved traffic safety goes to safer vehicles, not safer drivers, according to last fall's study by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS). Several Web sites outline safety information for different vehicles. The IIHS site, www.iihs.org, contains vehicle ratings and lists its top picks for 2007. Auto insurers support the site, which is viewed as one of the most credible sources for car safety research. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's www.safercar.gov gives five-star crash and rollover ratings. Consumer Reports' Web site, www.consumerreports.org, costs \$5.95 for a one-month subscription and contains independent safety data. For more information, go to <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB118340771329055676.html>

Source: The Wall Street Journal, July 3, 2007

Companies Look out for Truck Drivers' Health, Safety

In addition to risking their lives in traffic crashes, truck drivers are also prone to more health problems than the average American. Many companies are developing campaigns to improve employees' health, and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) is considering tightening its rules for diabetes and high blood pressure. "We've been trying to educate people to the linkage between being a healthy person and a safe driver," a researcher said. Some companies encourage their drivers to get health screenings, offer weigh-loss workshops and replace soda in vending machines with water and green tea. These measures have saved the companies millions in insurance and workers' compensation claims. The trucking industry has the most fatalities of any occupation, according to government data. Truck drivers also smoke more and exercise less than other Americans. Drivers are responding by cooking lean meals in their cabs, jogging before starting off for the day and getting advice from their companies' wellness coordinators. Source: The Associated Press, July 9, 2007



Auto Manufacturers Work Together on Vehicle-to-Vehicle Communication Standards

Europe's Car-2-Car consortium is working to make driving safer by developing vehicle-to-vehicle technologies. General Motors, Audi, BMW, Fiat, Honda, Renault, hardware manufacturers and universities are all committed to creating "foresighted driving" and allowing vehicles of all makes and models to speak to each other. Included in the Car-2-Car consortium's system are three technologies: Global Positioning Satellites, a wireless data system similar to w-fi technology and an on-board computer. The wireless system has a range of 100 meters in the city and 500 meters in outlying areas. Drivers are warned through messages displayed on the dashboard, audio alerts or vibrating seats. Real-time traffic alerts could also pop up on road signs and traffic lights. The consortium's backers say the system would be inexpensive because it's based on off-the-shelf technologies. For more information, go to <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/technology/6274974.stm>

Source: BBC News Interactive, July 6, 2007

10th Anniversary of Drowsy Driving Death Draws Attention to Legislation

Maggie McDonnell, a 20-year-old college student, was killed 10 years ago by a driver who fell asleep behind the wheel after being up for more than 30 hours. To learn more about Maggie and the drowsy driving legislation that followed her death, go to http://www.sleepfoundation.org/site/c.hulXKjM0lxF/b.2897335/k.C4F5/Remembering_Maggie_McDonnell.htm?tr=y&aid=2814880 . For more information about the dangers of drowsy driving, go to www.drowsydriving.org Source: NSF Alert, July 3, 2007

Beyond Cell Phones: Lawmakers Try to Ban Variety of Electronic Devices for Drivers

Bills in a dozen of states would carry fines of \$50 to \$600 for playing video games, watching DVDs or using computers and fax machines while driving. Tennessee is the first state to enact such a law. The states are trying to determine how big a threat these electronic gadgets are—data are hard to find because police cannot always determine whether a distraction inside the car caused a crash. Few deaths have been linked directly to the devices, and that's why some traffic safety experts say laws should focus on areas that are proven to save lives, such as safety belt and drunk driving enforcement. For more information, go to http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2007-07-05-driving-wired_N.htm?csp=34 Source: USA Today, July 5, 2007

Most Seat/Head Restraints in SUVs, Pickups and Minivans Rated Marginal or Poor

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) found in a recent evaluation that the seats and head restraints in 21 SUV, pickup and minivan models are rated "good" in rear-impact crashes. However, 54 were rated marginal or poor and 12 were found to be acceptable. The ratings were based on simulated crashes at 20 miles per hour and geometric measurements of head restraints. Subaru, Volvo, Acura, Ford, Honda and Hyundai were among the best performers. Good designs keep the head and torso moving together to prevent neck injuries, the most common reported in crashes. SUVs' head restraint ratings have improved significantly since the last evaluation, while pickups' and minivans' have gotten slightly better. Under a rule by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), front seat head restraints that are higher and fit closer to the head must be fitted in 80 percent of a manufacturer's models by September 2009. For more information, go to <http://www.iihs.org/news/rss/pr070307.html> Sources: IIHS and The Detroit News, July 3, 2007

Customers Need Information about Tire Pressure, Monitoring Systems

Because drivers are becoming lax about checking the air pressure in their tires, repair shops, parts suppliers and insurers are encouraged to educate their customers about routine checks. Motorists will be even more likely to ignore their air pressure when tire pressure monitoring systems (TRMS) become mandatory for new vehicles in September 2007. TPMS alerts drivers when one or more tires



are 25 percent below the recommended inflation. According to the Rubber Manufacturers Association (RMA), only a little more than half of drivers reported checking their tire pressure in the past month. "Since tire pressure monitors only issue a warning after a significant drop in tire pressure, motorists are risking tire damage by ignoring regular maintenance," the RMA president and CEO said. Drivers should check all tires, including the spare, once a month with an accurate gauge. Sending a mailer to local clients, distributing flyers about tire pressure and TPMS and preparing a fact sheet for customers would help improve safety and generate goodwill. For more information, go to <http://www.search-autoparts.com/searchautoparts/article/articleDetail.jsp;jsessionid=Gb6p1m1rYKvZ1v6vRZWTwHk1XyJgnwjQ965qgYKKT12ZJZHfdmJ4!-1602330459?id=437720> Source: Aftermarket Business, June 1, 2007

Automakers Add Technology Features, but Some Consumers Skeptical

As analysts predict that more than half of all new vehicles will be equipped with technology that will connect drivers to the outside world, auto manufacturers must balance the newest advances with consumers' desires for affordable and practical cars. "We're not dummies -- we know how to use the Internet," one consumer said. "But driving a car is driving a car for us. It's not about playing games." The U.S. market for technology such as GM's OnStar service is expected to grow from \$3.5 billion to somewhere between \$12-16 billion by 2012-2014. GM promotes OnStar as a safety feature instead of a mobile link to the Internet. OnStar's new feature, where drivers can download directions from MapQuest at home and send them to the in-car screen, will be available by the end of the year. Ford will debut Sync in the fall on the Focus, allowing drivers to control their digital music players by voice or steering-wheel controls and have text messages read to them out loud. The service could grow to the point where drivers can get software downloads automatically or ask the car questions about its maintenance. For more information, go to http://www.dailytribune.com/stories/070207/loc_gizmos001.shtml Source: Associated Press, July 2, 2007

Thousands of Buses, Trucks Inspected during International Roadcheck Event

Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) certified inspectors performed the highest number of inspections conducted in International Roadcheck's 20 years. Of the 62,370 truck and bus inspections conducted June 5-7, 93.8 percent of drivers passed. The number of drivers placed out of service (many for hours-of-service violations) increased from 5.6 percent in 2006 to 6.2 percent in 2007, but safety belt violations fell from 1,223 to 829. About 79 percent of the vehicles passed inspection. Brakes were the cause of more than half of the vehicle defects. The number of hazardous materials trucks placed out of service declined to 17.7 percent from 18.2 percent in 2006. Trucks and drivers were targeted for inspections based on safety or past inspection records or the trained inspector's observation. For more information, go to www.cvsa.org Source: CVSA, June 29, 2007

Speed Limit Supporters Follow California Columnist's Lead

To encourage drivers to go the speed limit, save gas and make the road safer for others, a San Jose Mercury News columnist founded "Drive the Speed Limit Day" on June 29. Gary Richards, the paper's Roadshow columnist, promoted the day that caught on throughout California. Supporters of the 65 mile per hour speed limit cut out ready-made signs from the paper and taped them to their windows. Richards received more than 400 e-mails and calls from people who planned on participating. He started a few days early, and the gas mileage in his Prius jumped from 48 miles per gallon to 56.1 when he drove 65 mph. For more information, go to http://www.mercurynews.com/ci_6258960 Source: San Jose Mercury News, June 29, 2007



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Washington Monitors Drivers' Speeds Electronically

The Washington Department of Transportation embedded small wire coils in miles of the state's roadways to monitor drivers' speed. The coils record speed by generating electrical pulses when a vehicle drives over them. The DOT uses the information to issue a quarterly speed report and identify the top 10 locations where speeds hit 90 miles per hour or above. The State Patrol also uses the data to determine where to place speed patrols. "In the old days there was less science [in] how to deploy troopers," an assistant chief for the patrol said. "Now things are extremely data-driven. Our goal is to reduce injuries, collisions and deaths." For more information, go to

http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/localnews/2003770809_speedy02m.html

Source: The Seattle Times, July 2, 2007

PSA Featuring Crash Footage Asks Drivers to Move Over for Emergency Vehicles

The "Move Over, America" campaign released a new public service announcement to urge drivers to change lanes and slow down when approaching an emergency vehicle on the side of the road. The ad includes footage of an incident in which a police officer is struck during a traffic stop. The commission, led by the National Safety Commission, the National Sheriffs' Association and the National Association of Police Organizations, printed 100,000 "move over" bumper stickers for emergency vehicles in Florida. Phil Seguin's son Ryan, a police officer, died when a vehicle hit him on the side of the road. Phil said he hoped talking about Ryan's death would raise awareness of the issue. To view the PSA and for more information, go to http://www.sun-sentinel.com/news/local/southflorida/sfl-filmmoveover0703nbjul03_0_7351923.story?coll=sfla-home-headlines

Source: South Florida Sun-Sentinel, July 3, 2007

Quality, not Quantity, Determines Air Bags' Effectiveness

More doesn't necessarily mean better when it comes to air bags. Some auto manufacturers tout the number of air bags they can pack into a vehicle, but counting air bags is not the best way to gauge safety. Air bags work with other safety features to protect occupants, and a few well-designed air bags can be as effective as multiple, smaller bags. Front air bags are required by law, and many now have sensors that allow the air bag to deploy differently depending on the occupant's size. Statistics show that side air bags are effective, and a single curtain air bag can cover up to three rows in the vehicle. Some vehicles even have air bags that protect the legs, but their effectiveness has not been proven yet. For more information, go to <http://money.cnn.com/2007/06/25/autos/airbags/index.htm>

Source: CNNMoney.com, July 1, 2007

Six Tips Help Drivers Navigate Flooded Roads

Because only a few inches of water can cause car damage, Motors.co.uk and the Institute of Advanced Motorists offer six safety tips to help drivers cope when they come across flooded roads. First, drivers should never drive through a road with deep water. If motorists have to drive through some water, they should drive on the highest part of the road and hold off if another car is approaching from the opposite direction. Do not drive too fast—go only fast enough to create a small bow wave. Once drivers start, they should keep the car in first gear and keep going. Never take a foot off the accelerator, because water might get in the exhaust pipe. At the other side, keep revving the engine and applying brakes to dry them. For more information, go to

http://www.companycardriver.co.uk/news/article/?art_ID=415961523

Source: Company Car Driver, June 28, 2007

Nissan To Debut Drunk Driving Alert

To help prevent drunk driving, Nissan Motor Co. is adding a new message alert in its CARWINGS navigation system. When the ignition is turned on after 5:30 p.m., the message "Do not drive after drinking!" appears for five seconds on the navigation panel. Nissan is also the national sponsor of



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MADD's Strides for Change walks for the third straight year. The company will debut its lane departure prevention system in the fall on the Infiniti EX35 crossover. In Japan, Nissan has a goal to cut in half the number of fatalities or serious injuries in which its vehicles are involved by 2015. For more information, go to <http://www.theautochannel.com/news/2007/06/28/053646.html>

Source: The Auto Channel; Edmunds.com, June 28, 2007

Families Ask That Automotive Defect Information Be Made Public

Vehicle safety-consulting firm Safety Research & Strategies and a lawyer representing families of three men involved in a fatal crash have written to House and Senate committees, asking for the release of vehicle safety data. The letter raises concerns about the secrecy of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) Early Warning Reporting data, required under the TREAD Act. Two men died and one was seriously injured in August 2006 in a rollover crash that sparked the recall of some light-truck tires manufactured in China. Foreign Tire Sales reported to NHTSA in October 2005 that something might be wrong with the tires. Since 2003, auto and tire manufacturers have had to report certain types of incidents to alert regulators to defects. For more information, go to <http://www.aaafoundation.org/multimedia/index.cfm?button=article&?SMContentIndex=0&SMContentSet=0>

Source: AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, July 10, 2007

California Parks System Installs Cameras at Intersections with Stop Signs

The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority in Southern California is gearing up to issue tickets to drivers who don't stop at intersections equipped with the nation's first stop-sign cameras. A sworn park ranger will review video and determine whether to send a \$100 citation to the vehicles' owners when drivers fail to come to a complete stop at five sites. Nearby residents are calling for the cameras' removal, claiming they're illegal and there only to generate revenue. The authority defends the cameras, saying they're legal because they're on private roads and that their purpose is to save lives. "I'm more worried about the lawsuit from somebody whose child is killed" by a car at one of the sites, an authority executive said. Source: The Los Angeles Times, July 12, 2007

Tragic Crash Highlights Safety Concerns for Truckers

Crashes like the one that recently killed five New York teenagers are constantly causes of worry for truck drivers. An SUV carrying the recent high school graduates attempted to pass another car when it struck a tractor-trailer head on. David Laverty, the tractor-trailer driver, has not been blamed and tried to help the teens after the crash. Intense heat from a fire kept him away from the SUV. Investigators are looking into the crash. Source: Automotive Digest, July 11, 2007

GM Vehicles Will Communicate with Other Cars To Improve Safety

General Motors is working on its V2V system, where cars will communicate with each other about traffic conditions, approaching emergency vehicles and impending collisions. Using sat-van, a microprocessor, and a wireless Local Area Network, information is transferred in milliseconds and appears as a dashboard alert. Key benefits are improved traffic safety and reduced commuting times. V2V will work most efficiently when more than 90 percent of vehicles have it, which might be 10 years from now. Most major manufacturers are working on developing a standard protocol so vehicles will speak the same language. A four-year trial will begin in Germany this fall. For more information, go to http://www.thecarconnection.com/Auto_News/Daily_Auto_News/GM_Wants_Cars_to_Talk_To_Each_Other.S173.A12568.html?srccd=de20070711

Source: The Car Connection, July 11, 2007



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Maine Tops List of Fatalities on Rural Roads

Maine is the state with the highest percentage of rural-road fatalities, according to a list compiled by the National Center for Excellence in Rural Safety (CERS) at the University of Minnesota. More than 90 percent of Maine's traffic fatalities in 2005 were on rural roads. High speeds on these roads is one cause of their high fatality rates. Head-on and lane-departure are common types of rural-road crashes. For an enire list of states, go to www.ruralsafety.umn.edu

Public Agencies Partner with Private Companies to Develop Driving Updates

In the near future, drivers will get instant updates in their vehicles on road conditions, congestion, construction and weather. "The idea is to give travelers the best real-time information possible," the secretary of the Illinois Department of Transportation said. Drivers now can call 511 in Chicago and St. Louis to get updates for certain roads. The phone systems are privately managed, and callers have to listen to a short advertisement about the sponsor. But soon, every vehicle will have its own Internet protocol address, allowing information to come directly to the car. Private industry and transportation departments are working together to develop Internet and mapping technology. For more information, go to <http://www.whig.com/289321446267271.php> Source: Quincy Herald-Whig, July 10, 2007

Work-Home

Review Explores Teen Driving Safety

A Transportation Review released by the National Conference of State Legislatures examines teen driving issues. The review focuses on federal and state actions, cell phone use while driving and underage drinking. A comparison of the states' graduated licensing laws and recommended information sources are included. For more information, go to <http://www.ncsl.org/print/transportation/teendriving07.pdf>

Parents Can Help Rein in Risky Teen Drivers

In a survey conducted by AAA and Seventeen magazine, 61 percent of teen drivers admitted to risky driving habits, which include text messaging, talking on cell phones and carting around multiple passengers. These behaviors can have tragic consequences: 10 teens die every day, on average, in cars driven by themselves or other teens. Safety advocates say parents play a vital role in keeping their teens safe and must enforce rules about banning distractions such as cell phones and multiple passengers. For more information, go to http://www.usatoday.com/money/autos/2007-07-09-teens-risky-driving_N.htm Source: USA Today, July 10, 2007

Teen Driving Legislation Outpaces That of Senior Drivers in Illinois

Some Illinois residents affected by elderly-driver crashes are accusing lawmakers of unfairly focusing on teen driving legislation, but legislators say data, not politics, factor into their decisions. Illinois recently enacted limits on when teens can drive and how many passengers they can have. Legislators point to statistics that show inexperienced drivers are most at risk. The state also has some of the toughest older driver laws in the country, requiring seniors to complete a driving exam every few years. Some new reports are finding that senior drivers are becoming as risky as teens, a problem that will grow as baby boomers age. For the time being, legislators are leaving senior driving decisions to the elderly and their families. Some tips for recognizing that it's time to stop driving include feeling uncomfortable behind the wheel, noticing dents and scrapes, getting lost and having trouble seeing signs. Families can help senior motorists by observing their driving, initiating conversations, suggesting options and seeking outside help. Source: Chicago Daily Herald, June 27, 2007



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Cameras Catch Risky Behavior; Teens Watch Tapes with Parents to Improve Skills

University of Iowa researchers are fitting cameras in teen drivers' vehicles to monitor their risky behaviors. The pilot project lets new drivers see their mistakes, making them face up to the reality of their driving skills. The driving events captured by the camera are e-mailed to parents, who review the footage with their teen. After seeing themselves on tape, the riskier drivers improved by 90 percent. The next step is to outfit cars with cameras in Minneapolis to monitor teens in an urban setting. For more information, go to <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2007/07/10/eveningnews/main3039099.shtml>
Source: CBS Evening News, July 10, 2007

International Traffic Safety News

Australia, Canada Use Different Advertising Approaches To Slow Speeders

A new Australian advertising campaign attempts to get young men to slow down by making them feel small. One TV commercial features pedestrians and passengers who wiggle their little fingers at speeding drivers with the tagline "Speeding. No one thinks big of you." The ads target try to portray speeding and street racing as socially unacceptable. Ontario also is launching a speed public service campaign that will star Champ car driver Paul Tracy. In the ad, Tracy warns young drivers that racing off the track is dangerous and uncool. To view the Australian ad, go to <http://vids.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=vids.individual&videoid=2039766057>. For more information, go to <http://www.thestar.com/News/article/232249> Source: The Toronto Star, July 4, 2007

Hands-Free Phones May Not Be Best Solution to Cell Phone Ban

A Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) study shows that drivers who use hands-free cell phones react more slowly and are more likely to miss road signs and possible hazards. Hand-held phones are now illegal in the United Kingdom, but the report cautions that hands-free kits are not necessarily safe. Volunteers, who drove an 11-mile route in a simulator while engaging in conversations, were less able to communicate while using hands-free kits than when talking to a passenger. TRL said a ban on hands-free phones might be necessary in the future. Source: FleetNewsNet, July 6, 2007

England Bans Dangerous Distraction in Company Cars: Smoking

A British smoking ban that includes all work vehicles could have several safety benefits. Experts from Australia's Monash University Accident Research Centre found that smoking while driving is unhealthy for passengers and drivers, but it also can be more distracting than using a cell phone or eating. Under the new law, smoking is banned in all work vehicles that are used by more than one person, even if all occupants are smokers. One exception is for convertibles, but only when the top is down. Companies are encouraged to ban smoking in all vehicles, whether they fall under the new law or not. Some rental firms are putting a smoking ban on their entire fleet. Source: FleetNewsNet, June 29, 2007

Court Cases Explore Employer Liability in Crashes

Two court cases in the United Kingdom have centered on employers' liability when employees are injured while driving for work. The 2004 case of Land Rover and Exel Logistics showed that fleets can be held accountable even when the drivers are exonerated. The case also proved the importance of an audit trail, which is helpful in a defense. In another case, Michael Eyres sued his company after he suffered injuries in a crash in which he fell asleep at the wheel after being awake and working for many hours. Though Eyres was using his cell phone while driving, the Court of Appeals found this actually helped him stay awake and that his employer was at fault for encouraging him to drive 300 miles after working all day. Source: FleetNewsNet, June 27, 2007



Unions Defend Themselves against Firm's Claims of Hindering Road Safety

Unions in the United Kingdom deny they are blocking fleets from improving traffic safety by asking employees not to turn in personal information for risk-management analysis. ING Car Lease says it has run into problems with unions who support drivers not willing to hand over the information for privacy concerns. "It's ironic that unions have their members' best interests at heart yet could be inadvertently increasing their exposure to accidents at work by discouraging drivers from providing vital information," ING's fleet risk manager said. Unions refute those claims, and a sample of fleet managers said they think resistance is coming from individual employees, not unions.

Source: FleetNewsNet, July 12, 2007

Drowsy Driving a Serious Problem in Ontario, but Residents Largely Unconcerned

Nearly 1.3 million drivers in Ontario fell asleep or dozed behind the wheel at least once in the past year, according to a poll by the Traffic Injury Research Foundation (TIRF). More than 100,000 did so five or more times. "The number of fatigued and drowsy drivers in Ontario is a matter of major concern because of the elevated crash risk they pose," a TIRF researcher said. But Ontarians are less concerned about drowsy driving than they are other traffic safety problems. They also know pulling over to nap is the most effective thing they can do to ward off drowsy driving, but that's the method they're least likely to choose. For more information, go to www.trafficinjuryresearch.com.

Source: TIRF, July 9, 2007