



Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers November 15, 2007

Michigan News

Deer Demand Our Attention

Car-deer crashes are a year-round problem that deserves the attention of the motoring public. What you can do: Stay aware, awake, alert and sober; Safety belts are your best defense in any collision; Be especially alert during the fall; Deer are herd animals and frequently travel in single file. If you see one deer cross the road, chances are there are more waiting.; Don't rely on gimmicks, flashing your high-beam headlights or honking your horn to deter deer---these methods do NOT work. If a crash is unavoidable: Don't swerve; Brake firmly; Hold on to the steering wheel; Stay in your lane; Bring your vehicle to a controlled stop. For a copy of a free brochure, "Don't Veer For Deer!" call (517) 333-2722. Source: Michigan Deer Crash Coalition

Latest Traffic Safety News

Committee Considers Tax Credit for Truck Safety Systems

Legislation that would give a tax credit to commercial fleet operators that buy advanced safety technology for their vehicles is now in the House Ways and Means Committee. The Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association supports the tax credit, which would be 50 percent of the cost of qualifying safety systems with a cap of \$1,500 per system and \$3,500 per vehicle. Qualifying vehicles have to weigh more than 26,000 pounds or seat at least 11 passengers. In 2005, more than 5,000 people died and 114,000 were injured in large-truck related crashes in the United States.

Drowsy Driving Week Starts with Release of New Report, Features on Web Site

The National Sleep Foundation's (NSF) first Drowsy Driving Prevention Week started Nov. 5. To kick off the week, NSF released its 2007 State of the States Report on Drowsy Driving, which outlines current educational, training, licensing and law enforcement activities regarding drowsy driving. One of the key findings is that drowsy driving is underreported because states don't report drowsy driving crashes the same way. NSF also created a Drowsy Driving Memorials and Testimonials page on www.DrowsyDriving.org. It's one of the many new features of the site, which also includes celebrity video clips, public service announcements and education videos. For more information, go to www.DrowsyDriving.org

NSF Urges Drivers To Get Enough Sleep before Thanksgiving Travel

As travelers get ready for their Thanksgiving trips, the National Sleep Foundation (NSF) asks drivers to help reduce the drowsy driving problem by getting enough sleep before taking off. Concerned motorists can also spread the word about the dangers of drowsy driving and make a tax-deductible gift to support NSF's campaign to prevent drowsy driving. For more information, go to http://www.sleepfoundation.org/site/c.hulXKjM0lxF/b.2418851/k.30CD/Press_Room.htm

Committees Hold Hearing about Federal Drunk Driving Programs

The U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works' Subcommittee on Transportation Safety, Infrastructure Security and Water Quality held a hearing Oct. 25 to discuss the effectiveness of national drunk driving programs. The opening statements and submitted testimony are available at http://www.trb.org/news/blurb_detail.asp?id=8332



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NTSB Updates List of Most Wanted Safety Improvements

The National Transportation Safety Board updated its "Most Wanted List" of safety improvements, which now includes 44 recommendations. The list was established in 1990 to focus attention on issues to reduce crashes and save lives. For more information, go to http://www.nts.gov/Recs/brochures/MostWanted_2008.pdf

Report Examines Role of Traffic Safety Public Information Programs

The Transportation Research Board released National Cooperative Highway Research Program Research Results Digest 322: Public Information and Education in the Promotion of Highway Safety. The report examines the role of public information and education campaigns in helping change driver behavior. For more information, go to http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/nchrp/nchrp_rrd_322.pdf

Federal, State Transportation Officials Meet To Discuss Deer-Car Crashes

Attendees from 15 states attended the Annual Deer-Vehicle Crash Reduction Symposium Oct. 29 in New York. The speakers presented on defining and reducing the deer-car crash problem, which accounts for more than \$1 billion in damage nationally each year. The Deer-Vehicle Crash Information and Research Center (DVCIR) organized the symposium and also held its business meeting. Business meeting attendees decided to consider funding research projects focused on identifying deer-car crash problem areas and the relationship between these kinds of crashes and roadside vegetation.

News from USDOT

Transportation Secretary Tells Story of Crash To Launch Motorcycle Safety Campaign

The U.S. Department of Transportation plans to improve motorcycle safety with more education and training for riders, tougher standards for labeling helmets and road designs that take motorcycle dynamics into consideration, Secretary Mary E. Peters announced. Secretary Peters also stars in a new television public service announcement where she gives riding gear the credit for saving her life in a 2005 motorcycle crash. "Check your bike before each ride, wear all your safety equipment and ride with others so you're more visible," she says in the PSA. "If I hadn't taken those safety precautions, I wouldn't be standing here today." The new motorcycle safety initiative will create new standards for training novice riders, curb counterfeit helmet labels and train law enforcement officers to spot unsafe motorcyclists. The PSA is part of a broad public awareness campaign about safe riding techniques. For more information or to watch the PSA, go to www.nhtsa.gov

FMCSA To Host Listening Session about Safety Initiative

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration will hold a listening session Dec. 4 on the agency's Comprehensive Safety Analysis (CSA) 2010 initiative. Partners and stakeholders can share feedback at the session, which will take place from 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at the Sheraton Arlington Hotel in Arlington, Texas. An opening plenary session will lay out the overall status, and three breakout sessions will be offered three times so attendees can participate in each. To register online, go to www.fmcsa.dot.gov/csa2010-register

NHTSA Looks at Monitoring Systems for Tires of Heavy Trucks

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) said the agency is considering tire pressure monitoring systems for heavy vehicles. "It's much more complicated than (TPSM for) passenger tires," NHTSA Deputy Administrator Jim Ports said. NHTSA also is drafting a notice of proposed rulemaking to update federal regulation concerning medium truck tires. For more information go to http://www.moderntiredealer.com/t_inside.cfm?action=news_det&storyID=8047

Source: Modern Tire Dealer, October 30, 2007



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Audit Finds Security Flaws in National Driver Database

The U.S. Department of Transportation's inspector general reported that the DOT doesn't adequately protect data in a national database of problem drivers. The report said information about these problem drivers isn't recorded in a timely manner in the National Driver Register (NDR). The database is designed to let state motor-vehicle agencies share information about drivers who have been convicted of drunk driving and other violations. The 42 million records in the NDR are encrypted properly, but they're not protected similarly when the data is transferred between state agencies. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) does not contractually require its vendor to apply encryption during data transfer. Also, the backgrounds of people who use the database often aren't fully checked. In response, NHTSA has pledged to work with the vendor to ensure encryption at all times and will validate the backgrounds of individuals with access to the NDR. For more information, go to <http://www.pcworld.com/article/id.139326-c.privacy/article.html>

Source: Computerworld, November 6, 2007

Feds To Track Trucks Crossing U.S.-Mexico Border

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) will spend \$367,000 to outfit trucks crossing the U.S.-Mexico border with tracking devices. The new demonstration program will allow FMCSA to monitor truck location and make sure trucks comply with hours-of-service laws. The project came about after Congress members said they wanted to know whether cross-border trucks are complying with federal safety and trade laws. Trucks will be tracked by vehicle number and company only; no driver information will be gathered.

Work-Home

Impaired Driving Rate for Teens Stays Steady at 30 Percent

The rate of impaired driving among high-school seniors has stayed at about 30 percent after declining for several years. Researchers for the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) found that the percentage of seniors who had driven a car in the past two weeks after drinking heavily or using drugs fell from 35 to 31 percent from 2001 to 2003, but has remained at about 30 percent through 2006. Thirteen percent of seniors reported driving after using marijuana, and 10 percent said they drove after consuming five or more alcoholic drinks. The percentage of teens who said they were in a traffic crash in the past year after using marijuana was the same as those who drank heavily. "These findings are another wake-up call that we cannot afford to be complacent about this great public health risk," the director of the National Institutes of Health said. The research was published in the Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs' November 2007 issue.

New Tracking Technology Allows Parents To Monitor Teen Driving from a Distance

Some parents are using GPS and other devices to give themselves piece of mind when their teens are out on the road. Certain systems can send e-mails or text messages notifying parents of the car's location, speed and whether seat belts are being used. Parents pay for the device and a monthly fee for GPS tracking. Although teens aren't excited about being watched all the time, proponents say the new technology helps novice drivers become aware of their behavior, which helps them become more responsible. No data shows that monitoring reduces traffic injuries or deaths, but parents insist it must be better than not knowing. Some insurance companies offer tracking technology, and one service collects data in the car's black box, which can be removed and downloaded to a computer. Another allows parents to disable the car's starter remotely or honk the horn as a warning, and many offer a "virtual fence" that sends an alert when the driver goes outside a preset range.



Child Passenger Safety Experts Share Common Seat Errors

Although parents have the best intentions when installing child safety seats, most are installed improperly unless checked by a professional technician. Nationally, about 80 percent of seats are misused. "There's just so many facets to the car seat that makes it very complicated," one child passenger safety expert said. Because the type of child safety seat and type of car varies so much, it's important that a certified technician demonstrates proper installation and use. Some common mistakes are facing a child forward too soon (they should be rear-facing until at least 1 years old AND 20 pounds); allowing the seat or harness strap to be too loose (the seat should not move more than 1 inch in any direction); using a seat that's unsafe (one that has expired or has been in a moderate to severe crash); not placing the seat in the center of the back seat; and keeping too much clutter around the seat. Source: Albany Times Union, November 6, 2007

International Traffic Safety News

Fleets, Government Advised To Ensure Safety of Workers Who Drive Own Cars

A British official is urging both fleet managers and the government to act immediately regarding the problem of gray fleet drivers, or business travelers who use their own cars. Research shows that about 83 percent of firms do not have policies in place to ensure gray fleet vehicles are maintained. "This is a very significant topic and one the Government seems to have given a low priority to," Susan Kramer said. "Many businesses haven't focused on it either. That's something that's got to change." Something as simple as an information campaign could be effective. Source: FleetNewsNet, November 1, 2007

Group Gets Senate Support, Needs Signatures for Global Road Safety Petition

The U.S. Senate unanimously passed a resolution to support the goals of a World Day of Remembrance for traffic crash victims and their families. The Association for Safe International Road Travel needs 1.2 million signatures in support of the Campaign for Global Road Safety for the United Nations—almost 500,000 signatures have been collected so far. To sign the UN petition, go to www.makeroadssafe.org

Swedish Institute Publishes Report on Driver Distraction

VTI, the Swedish National Road and Transport Institute, has released a review of literature on distracted driving. The report is in English with a Swedish summary. To view the report, go to <http://www.vti.se/EPIBrowser/Publikationer%20-%20English/R594A.pdf>

Booklet Focuses on Steps Board Members Can Take To Ensure Safety

Because many fleet operators find it difficult to secure board-level support for new safety programs, the Health and Safety Executive produced a booklet that explains how leaders can create policies that will ensure a safer business. "One of the most common considerations at fleet events today is health and safety, yet it's one of the hardest issues for fleet managers to get on board members' agendas," the ACFO chairman said. Board involvement is more important than ever with the corporate manslaughter bill coming into force next year. Source: FleetNewsNet, November 5, 2007

Global Group Will Meet To Discuss Traffic Safety Best Practices

Because the United Nations has established global road safety as a priority, a Road Safety Congress of the Americas will take place in Río Grande, Puerto Rico. Attendees will discuss best practices for reducing traffic crashes, injuries and deaths and will help develop national and regional plans. For more information, go to <http://www.csva2007.com/english/>.