

MAFES Dawg Tracks



January 11, 2010

Practice Safe Driving Habits



MISSISSIPPI STATE
UNIVERSITY



Did you know that?

- Every 12 minutes someone dies in a motor vehicle crash.
- Every 10 seconds an injury occurs.
- Every 5 seconds a crash occurs.

Many of these accidents happen during the workday or going to and from work. Employers bear the cost of all jobs directly related to on-the-job accidents and some off-the-job as well. Increased traffic and congestion on our country's highways waste significant amounts of time and money in the form of lost productivity on the farm and also promotes risky driving behavior.

According to the Safety Exchange, traffic deaths are falling and seatbelt use is climbing. Following are some statistics that I believe are worth sharing. These are through 2008:

- 37,313 – The number of people killed in motor vehicle accidents - the lowest total since 1961 (36,285) and a 9 percent decline since 2007 (41,059).
- 1.28 – The number of fatalities per 100 million miles traveled, the lowest since 2007 (1.36 in 2007).

We must continually educate ourselves and new employees about the dangers that are lurking out there. As we have all seen, a split second can cause serious physical harm.

EMPLOYERS SHOULD –

- See that roadways and parking areas are kept clean and clear of debris and are well lighted.
- Install signs in high profile areas (parking areas) warning employees to “Buckle Up for Safety & Drive Carefully.”

Employers have the authority to protect their businesses. An integral part of this authority should include educating all employees of sound driving practices. Below are some practices that would be well to post in the shops and parking areas to enhance their awareness of safe driving habits:

- **Transport Materials Securely** – This should be a “no brainer,” but you can see it quite frequently where tools and equipment are being moved and are tied down securely. Loose objects can become airborne missiles, or sliding around, creating the potential for harm and injury to the drivers, passengers or other vehicles and passengers.
- **Use Seatbelts** – In most cases this is the law for highway vehicles. Statistics have proven that injuries and lives can be saved when they are used on farm and utility vehicles. The NSC has figures that state that each year approximately 12,000 lives are saved and 325,000 serious injuries are prevented by using seatbelts.
- **Don't Drive Distracted** – 25 to 30 percent of all traffic accidents are caused by driving distractions. Busy schedules and roadway delays make it hard to spend time at home. More time on the road means less time at home; it should behoove us to watch and drive carefully.

- **Don't Drive under the Influence of Alcohol** – Alcohol is involved in 40 percent of fatal vehicle crashes. This equates to 1 alcohol-related accident every 30 minutes. Alcohol, prescription drugs and illegal drugs can affect a person's ability to drive safely. It causes decreased concentration, coordination and reaction time. Alcohol is a contributing factor in 39% of all work-related vehicle crashes.
- **Don't Drive Aggressively** – Heavy traffic while traveling to and from work is very frustrating. Aggressive driving comes in a variety of ways, some of which we are all familiar with. If we don't remain focused on our driving and the other person as well, a serious accident could occur. I know that it's hard, but if this occurs, we should “lay-back” and let the “joker” in, no matter how hard it is to do this.
- **Don't Drive When Tired** – Fatigued or drowsy driving may be involved in more than 100,000 crashes each year, resulting in 40,000 injuries and 1,550 deaths. These statistics are a tip of the iceberg, as so many of these incidents aren't reported. It is so important to be well rested, sober, alert and focused on the road so that we can defend ourselves and against those who aren't prepared.
- **Train young Drivers** – 16 to 20 year olds are presenting a significant highway safety problem. Traffic crashes are the leading cause of fatalities for teens. Historically, this group is the age group that has the lowest seatbelt use rate and is the most likely to engage in risky driving with behavior that includes alcohol, speeding, drug-impaired and drowsiness. It is most important for employers with young drivers to actively promote safe driving practices.

Motor Vehicle crashes cost employers \$60 billion annually in medical care, legal expenses, property damage and lost productivity.

These crashes also drive up the cost of workers' compensation, social security, and health insurance. All of these factors above make it imperative that employers should know these seven traits and publicize it daily to all their employees, young and experienced alike.

ONLY FOOLS BREAK SAFETY RULES!!

BE AWAKE ~

BE ALERT~

BE ALIVE~

Ted Gordon-Risk Mgmt/ Loss Control Mgr.

MAFES / MSU-ES (662) 566-2201

Excerpts: www.Gemplers.com/alert/2006/safedriving

9/4/2009