

Safety NETS

FALL 2001

Information to help keep your employees safe on the road

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE MINNESOTA NETWORK OF EMPLOYERS FOR TRAFFIC SAFETY

Drive Safely Work Week, September 10-14

The ability to do multiple tasks in the workplace is a skill most managers desire in their employees. However, when this skill is attempted behind the wheel, it often leads directly to a negative impact on your bottom line.

With hectic schedules and a dramatic increase in in-vehicle technology, it seems people do everything in their cars: They fiddle with sound and navigation systems, read, eat, shave, put on makeup, talk on the phone and even work on laptops!

Since distracted driving is a major contributor in an estimated 4,000 to 8,000 crashes every day, it's evident that it is a behavior that needs to be modified—to reduce the personal tragedy to employees, their families, and employers, *and* to reduce the economic losses an organization suffers when an employee is involved in a traffic crash.

Whether your employees drive *for* work or just to and from work, traffic crashes pose a major risk. On the job, crashes resulting in injury cost the employer an average of \$25,000 per occurrence, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. An off-the-job crash is costly as well when you consider the

expense of replacing a productive worker, even if only for a short time.

Initiating traffic safety through the workplace not only saves an organization money, it's also an opportunity to strengthen employee relations. Helping employees to drive safely—both on and off the job—demonstrates that you care about their safety and well-being.

That's the goal of Drive Safely Work Week—a campaign for the workplace designed to help employers emphasize the importance of driving safely on and off the job and eliminate preventable crashes. The campaign is sponsored by the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS) and supported statewide by Minnesota NETS, a project of the Minnesota Safety Council and the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Office of Traffic Safety.

The national observance of Drive Safely Work Week (DSWW) is September 10-14, 2001. This year's campaign focuses on the issue of distracted driving. On the following page you'll find an article about paying attention behind the wheel. It's designed for your use as a handout for employees or for your internal newsletter.

Looking for materials and ideas for Drive Safely Work Week?

The Drive Safely Work Week tool kit provides a "how-to" manual with ideas for daily activities, a poster, sample newsletter article, fact sheets, camera-ready flyers (paycheck stuffers, table tents, printable "ads" and other special graphics), and a resource guide of low-cost resources and

incentives. All reproduceable materials are provided on CD-ROM. Total cost: \$25 plus shipping. To order, contact Laura at 1-800-444-9150 or 651-228-7336; e-mail: reiner@mnsafetycouncil.org.

Pay Attention—Safe Driving is a Full-Time Job

Thoughts for the Road

- Distracted driving is estimated to be a factor in between 25 to 50 percent of all traffic crashes—that’s between 4,000 and 8,000 crashes every day.
- Distracted driving is the presence of anything that can distract a driver’s physical and mental attention from driving.
- Driver instructors estimate that a driver makes an average of 200 decisions during every mile they drive. This leaves no room for multi-tasking while behind the wheel.
- According to a recent survey, drivers in the U.S. now spend a total of 500 million hours a week in their vehicles.

Drivers to Distraction:

- Other passengers, especially children
- Driving an unfamiliar vehicle or route
- Unsecured cargo
- Adjusting in-vehicle electronics including navigation systems, radios or CD players
- Eating or reading while driving
- Engaging in intense or emotional conversations with other passengers or on the phone
- Grooming

Tips to Manage Potential Distractions

- Pre-set the climate control, radio and CD player and identify the location of signals, wipers and lights in the vehicle.
- Don’t wait until you are driving to plan your route or attend to grooming. Plan before you go and leave a little earlier; it will help you to arrive at your destination safely and less stressed.
- Pull off the road to make calls. Pre-set your cellular phone with commonly called numbers and allow voicemail to handle your calls when possible.
- Be sure to properly secure pets and any cargo you may be transporting.

Got Kids?

- Be sure they are properly secured in an age-appropriate child passenger safety restraint.
- Provide them with things to do (books, travel games, etc.) to distract them so they’re not distracting you.
- Don’t hesitate to actually follow through with stopping the car. Just be sure to pull over where it’s safe and legal to do so.

Are you driven to distraction?

Two recent surveys reveal the types of things that are distracting today’s drivers.

2000 NETS Survey

- 70% Talking to passengers
- 47% Adjusting controls
- 29% Eating or reading
- 26% Picking up something that fell
- 19% Talking on the phone

1999 Response Insurance Company

- 62% Tuning the radio
- 57% Eating
- 56% Turning around to speak with a passenger
- 32% Reading or writing
- 29% Talking on the phone
- 17% Combing hair
- 16% Arguing with passenger
- 10% Putting on makeup

