

## **“Preventing Roadway Crashes” (Article provided by the American Society of Safety Engineers)**

Every year since 1992 transportation accidents have been the leading cause of on-the-job deaths in the U.S. Of the 5,764 workplace fatalities recorded in the U.S. for 2004, 1,374 deaths were transportation related. For many people, such as police, utility workers, sales personnel, commercial vehicle drivers, construction workers, fire fighters, emergency personnel and many more, their vehicle is their office.

### **Work Zone Safety Tips**

In 2004, 1,068 deaths resulted from motor vehicle crashes in road construction work zones.

#### **DOS & DON'TS While Driving Through a Site:**

##### **DO...**

- Pay attention to the orange diamond-shaped warning signs or electronic message boards posted in advance of a work zone.
- Stay alert. Dedicate your full
- Minimize distractions. Avoid phone, etc., while driving in a work
- Drive carefully & slowly through the speed limit in the work zone area.
- Pay close attention; heed directions work zone flaggers save lives.
- Watch for stopped or slowing
- Expect the unexpected. Anticipate
- Watch out how far-off traffic is
- Keep an eye out for construction well as the vehicles around you.
- Use extra caution when driving
- Watch for detours and & lane diversions.



attention to driving.  
changing radio stations, using a cell zone.  
construction site, always obey the posted  
on work zone warning signs. Signs and  
traffic. DO NOT TAILGATE.  
potential dangers.  
flowing.  
workers, their equipment & vehicles, as  
through a site at night.

##### **DO NOT...**

- Speed up or slow down significantly while going through a work zone. Most states, such as Illinois, have instituted new laws regarding work zones; penalties for speeding in these areas are double that of the normal penalties for speeding in a non-work zone stretch of road.
- Slow down to look at the construction work being done.
- Resume normal speed until after you emerge completely out of the work zone area.
- Tailgate – most of the accidents within a work zone are rear-end collisions.
- Change lanes within a work zone.

### **What Can Employers Do?**

The U.S. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) notes that unlike other workplaces, the roadway is not a closed environment. Although employers cannot control roadway conditions, NIOSH observes, they can promote safe driving by providing safety information to workers and by setting driver safety policies. Employers can take steps to protect their employees and their companies by:

- Assigning a key member of the management team, such as the safety and health professional, responsibility and authority to set and enforce a comprehensive driver safety policy.
- Enforcing mandatory seat belt use.
- Not requiring workers do drive irregular hours or far beyond their normal working hours.
- Not requiring workers to conduct business on a cell phone while driving.
- Developing work schedules that allow employees to obey speed limits and to follow applicable hours-of-

service regulations.

### **Safety Programs**

- Teach workers strategies for recognizing and managing driver fatigue and in-vehicle distractions.
- Provide training to workers operating specialized motor vehicles or equipment.
- Emphasize to workers the need to follow safe driving practices on and off the job.

### **Driver Performance**

- Ensure that workers assigned to drive on the job have a valid driver's license that is appropriate for their vehicle.
- Check driver's records of prospective employees.
- Maintain complete and accurate records of workers' driving performance.

### **Commercial Vehicle Safety**

#### **DO's & DON'Ts for Driving on the Roads with Commercial Vehicles:**

##### **DO...**

- Allow proper amount of space in front of and behind the truck. Fully loaded trucks weigh up to 80,000 pounds and take the length of a football field to stop. Most cars weigh only 3,000 pounds.
- Be wary. If you can't see the truck driver's face in the truck's side mirror, the truck driver can't see you.
- When passing a truck, pass quickly to resume visibility and change lanes only when you can see both of the truck's headlights in your rearview mirror.
- When you are a good distance in front of the truck, you can begin to slow down.
- Remember, large trucks and busses cannot stop as quickly as cars can.
- Steer clear of a truck's front and rear blind spots; stay back several car lengths and leave 10 car lengths in front of the truck for safety cushions. – following a truck too closely obscures your view. Blind spots around large trucks are: directly in front of them; directly behind them; and on the sides of the cab, angling out at approximately 45 degrees.
- Allow trucks adequate space to maneuver.

##### **DO NOT...**

- Cut in front of a truck.
- Drive between two trucks.
- Drive inattentively.
- Merge improperly into traffic, causing a truck to maneuver or brake quickly.
- Cut directly in front of a large truck. They may not see you since one of their blind spots is directly in front of them.
- Try to turn right before a heavy truck engaging in the same maneuver.
- Slow down immediately after passing a large truck.

### **Statistics**

- Over the past 20 years, the number of large trucks involved in fatal crashes has declined by five percent – however, large truck crash deaths have increased since 2002 from 4,587 to 4,862 in 2004. Many of the solo truck drivers who died in crashes were not wearing their seat belts.
- In 2004, 40 percent of deaths in large truck crashes occurred on major/principal roads other than interstates and freeways, 30 percent on minor or local roads, 29 percent on interstates and freeways and the rest on unknown road types.
- Among vehicles in fatal 2004 crashes, 84 percent of large trucks and 62 percent of passenger vehicles were in crashes with two or more vehicles.