

*This is an electronic newsletter about workplace traffic safety from the Vermont Department of Labor. **RoadSafe Workplace** has been created to distribute statistics, facts, and other materials to help employers create, maintain, and improve their workplace traffic safety programs. Please use this information in your company newsletters, bulletin boards, or employee e-mail memos. Your thoughts and comments are always welcome. However, if you do not wish to receive **RoadSafe Workplace**, please reply with the word "unsubscribe" in the subject line.*



The number one cause of death and injury in the workplace are traffic crashes.



Vermont Highway Fatalities for 2008 were 73

*So Far in 2009: 52 Fatalities
Don't Let The Next One Be You!*

Workplace Safety Training

Two important events that focus on workplace safety are right around the corner.

Next week, the **Vermont Safety & Health Council** will sponsor its annual Expo at the Lake Morey Inn in Fairlee, VT. Registration will begin at 6:45 a.m. The first two hours (7:00am to 9:00am) will be devoted to a Construction Roundtable. Other topics to be covered during the Expo include: "Getting What You Want From Your Insurance Agents," "Safety Success Using Audits with Effective Communications Skills," and "Cell Phones and Blackberries: Dangerous Weapons." There will also be presentation by the three recipients of the Governor's Workplace Safety Award. The Expo will conclude at 3:00pm. Register at: 802-352-4427 or at paulinesingley@myfairpoint.net.

The **New England Regional Highway Safety Conference** is scheduled for November 9 & 10 at the Woodstock Inn & Resort in Woodstock, VT. This two-day conference will feature presentations by Federal and state highway safety officials on such topics as: High Risk Rural Roads; Photo Enforcement/Speed Management; Incident Management; Working with the Courts; Impaired Driving; Motorcycle Helmet Use and Laws; and Teen Drivers. The Conference will also feature plenary sessions including distracted driving. Suppliers are invited to exhibit their products and services, and private businesses are invited to send their safety officials and HR Directors to these sessions. For more information about attending and exhibiting, log on to:

<http://highwaysafety.vermont.gov/safetyconference2009vers2>

The Car Mirror: Looking Back

Rear view mirrors allow drivers to view the happenings of other vehicles both behind and beside their own vehicle in order to incorporate traffic activity into their driving decisions.

While vehicles inherently have "blind spots" that are not not conducive to safe driving, by using

mirrors the "blind spots" can be minimized and drivers can safely operate their vehicles.

- Inside Rear View Mirror - The objective of the placement of the inside rear view mirror is simple: to be capable of viewing directly behind your vehicle through your rear

window. Set the interior mirror slightly to the right so your face is just out of view.

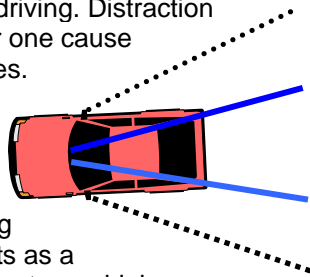
- Outside Right Rear View Mirror - Adjust the side view mirrors just beyond the point where you can see the side of the car on the inside edge of the mirror.
- Outside Left Rear View Mirror - Similar to the adjustment necessary to the Right Rear View Mirror, adjust the Left Rear View Mirror so that you can see the side and rear of the car on the inside edge of the mirror. The adjustment should allow the driver to view the rear of the car as well as the lane beside the vehicle.

If there is no vehicle visible when checking the mirrors, it may be adjacent to your rear door which can be spotted by checking the side view mirror. Most of us have dealt with blind spots by turning our head for a quick check.

Safety Tips for Night Driving

As we enter the fall months, the sun is setting earlier in the evening and rising later in the morning, producing more and more hours of darkness-driving. The National Safety Council has produced a list of night-driving safety tips that Vermont businesses may wish to pass along to their drivers.

- Prepare your vehicle for night driving. Keep headlights, tail lights, signal lights and windows (inside and out) clean.
- Have your headlights properly aimed. Mis-aimed headlights blind other drivers and reduce your ability to see the road.
- Don't use your cell phone for talking or texting while driving. Distraction is the number one cause of fatal crashes.
- Don't drink and drive. Alcohol severely impairs driving ability and acts as a depressant. Just one drink can induce fatigue.
- Avoid smoking when you drive. Smoke's nicotine and carbon monoxide hamper night vision.
- If there is any doubt about the degree of darkness, turn your headlights on. Lights will not help you see better in early twilight, but



While this isn't generally a problem in terms of missing something ahead; there can be a dangerous side effect. Unless you've worked to control it, your arms will move in the direction that your eyes are looking causing the steering wheel to turn. With well-positioned mirrors, your head won't have to turn as far to check any remaining blind spots.

Properly adjusted rear view mirrors will allow you to shift your eyes side to side every 2 seconds and check the rear every 5-8 seconds. This allows you to plan for an escape route, and for you to create space or a "cushion" around your vehicle in the event evasive action is necessary. Your mirrors should be positioned so that moving your eyes constantly to include viewing the activity both behind and beside the vehicle will become a part of the normal driving function.

- they'll make it easier for other drivers to see you. Being seen is as important as seeing.
- Reduce your speed and increase your following distances. It is more difficult to judge other vehicle's speeds and distances at night.
- Don't overdrive your headlights. You should be able to stop inside the illuminated area. If you're not, you are creating a blind crash area in front of your vehicle.
- When following another vehicle, keep your headlights on low beams so you don't blind the driver ahead of you.
- If an oncoming vehicle doesn't lower beams from high to low, avoid glare by watching the right edge of the road and using it as a steering guide.
- If you are on a long drive, make frequent stops for light snacks and exercise. If you're too tired to drive, stop and get rest.
- If you have car trouble, pull off the road as far as possible. Warn approaching traffic at once by setting up reflecting triangles near your vehicle and 300 feet behind it. Turn on flashers and the dome light. Stay off the roadway and get passengers away from the area.

Destroying the Myth: The Defensive Driver

Many people in Vermont, in fact, more than half of those involved in fatal motor vehicle crashes do not wear seatbelts for a variety of reasons – most of which are myths that can easily be eliminated.

For instance some drivers who refuse to wear seatbelts say they are such a good defensive driver they do not need a seatbelt because they will never be in a crash. Well, no matter how good a driver you

are, you just can't control the other driver, especially if it is drunk or sleepy. On average, a person can expect to be involved in a crash once every ten years. For one out of 20 people, it will be a serious crash. And for one of every 60 persons born today, it will be fatal. Since you cannot avoid a crash no matter how good a defensive driver you are, your best protection is a seatbelt when you are traveling in a motor vehicle.

Distractions

Anything that takes your attention away from the task at hand is a distraction. If your task is hammering a nail in a board and you become distracted – you take your eyes away from the hammer, nail and board – you run the risk of seriously injuring your hand or fingers with the hammer. The same is true if you take your eyes off the road to look at a distraction (a text message or something outside the car), you run the same risk – a serious car crash-injury. The driver's full attention MUST be on the safe operation of the motor vehicle

and all company policies that govern drivers on the job MUST include that statement.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports that driver distraction is responsible for 25% to 30% of all motor vehicle crashes. According to NHTSA, 12% of the drivers were distracted; 10% did not see the crash coming (not paying attention); 4% were sleepy or asleep at the wheel. These numbers may well be very conservative since many people do not admit to distractions in their crash reports.

New Website for Motorcycle Helmet Safety

The Motorcycle Industry Council's Helmet Task Force has launched a new website, <https://online2.mic.org/helmetcheck/> to allow riders to verify that a helmet they own, or are considering for purchase, complies with the U.S. Department of Transportation's safety standard (FMVSS 218). This new website allows consumers to find information on DOT-compliant helmets from any helmet

manufacturer voluntarily participating in the database. Major helmet companies and distributors AFX, AGV, Arai, AXO, HJC, Icon, Scorpion, and Shoei have provided the information on their full line of helmets to the site. Additional manufacturers are providing information that will be added to the website soon.

Brochures Are Available

Project RoadSafe has produced several brochures about workplace traffic safety that are available on request, or can be downloaded from the Vermont Department of Labor website. The brochures include:

- ◆ ***A Workplace Traffic Safety Program for Your Company***
- ◆ ***The Cost of Workers' Compensation is Directly Impacted by Workplace Traffic Safety***
- ◆ ***Telling the Parents: A Trooper's Story About the Kids Who Lost***

- ◆ ***The Anatomy of A Crash: Death in Less than a Second!***
- ◆ ***Behavior Skills on the Road: Attitude Makes the Difference***
- ◆ ***Employers: Take Note of Workplace Traffic Safety***
- ◆ ***The Real Story About The Cost of Traffic Crashes***

These brochures can be used to help your employees better understand the need for, and benefits of an effective workplace traffic safety program.

These brochures are available in special packets by emailing: norman.james@state.vt.us or by visiting the

Project RoadSafe website: www.labor.vermont.gov (under "business" click "Workplace Safety" then click "Project RoadSafe.")

Employer Guidebook to Reduce Traffic Crashes

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), and Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS) have joined forces to create **Guidelines for Employers to Reduce Motor Vehicle Crashes** featuring a 10-step program to help improve traffic safety performance and minimize the risk of motor vehicle crashes. To receive your guide, use the contact information in the next column.

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Inattention, speed, driving while impaired, disregard for stop signs and traffic lights, and failure to yield the right of way are the major causes of crashes on our highways.



**REMEMBER: HANG UP YOUR CELL PHONE
BUCKLE UP YOUR SEATBELT**

Project Road-Safe newsletters are available from the Home Page of the Vermont Department of Labor. Go to: www.labor.vermont.gov. Then go to "Newsletters" in the right-hand column for our latest issue.