

MAFES Dawg Tracks



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7 Safe Driving Practices
Employees Must Know



Extension employees travel thousands of man/miles each year. We are blessed and fortunate that we have had very few accidents. The accidents that we have experienced haven't resulted in any life threatening injuries; again we are blessed for this fact. As you read the facts below relating to accidents and costs nationwide, I think you will agree that it is most important to remain focused when driving when work and personal time both are involved.

FACTS INVOLVING MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENTS-

- Every 12 minutes someone dies in a motor vehicle crash.
- Every 10 seconds an injury occurs and every 5 seconds a crash occurs.
- Many of these accidents occur during the work day or during a commute to and from work.
- Motor Vehicle crashes cost employees \$60 billion annually In medical care, legal expenses, property damage and lost production. These costs drive up the benefits such as workers compensation, Social Security, private health insurance, and disability insurance.
- The average crash costs an employer \$16,500. When a worker has an on-the-job crash, resulting in an injury, the costs to their employer is \$74,000 and can exceed \$500,000 when a fatality is involved.

Based on the facts above, employers bear much of the costs for these incidents. It is prudent for employers to promote driver safety programs to save lives and injuries, reduce out of pocket cash.

Following are safe driving practices that will enhance the safety of all our employees by saving lives and reducing the risk of life-altering injuries, protect our human and financial resources, and help to guard against potential university and personal liabilities that would be associated with accidents involving employees driving on university related trips:

- **TRANSPORT MATERIALS SECURELY-**
This should be a no-brainer, but it happens all the time where tools and equipment are being moved and aren't tied down securely. Loose objects can slide around and become airborne missiles, causing harm and injury to the vehicle and its passengers or other vehicles and/or passengers.
- **USE SEAT BELTS-**
Seat belts, singularly, are the most effective means of reducing deaths and serious injuries in traffic accidents. Seat belts have been proven to save 12,000 lives each year and 325,000 serious injuries in the USA.

**LIFE DOESN'T BEGIN BY
ACCIDENT
DON'T END IT WITH ONE!!**

ALERT TODAY<>ALIVE TOMMORROW

In an accident, non-users of seatbelts can expect to be thrown around in the car, thrown against the steering wheel, or ejected out of the door or through the window or windshield.

- **DON'T DRIVE IMPAIRED WITH ALCOHOL-**
Alcohol is used in 40% of all motor vehicle crashes. This equates to 1 alcohol-related accident every 30 minutes of driving time. Alcohol, some prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications and illegal drugs can all affect a person's driving ability. It can cause decreased alertness, concentration, coordination, and reaction time. Alcohol is a contributing factor in 39% of all work-related vehicle crashes.
- **DON'T DRIVER AGGRESSIVELY-**
Heavy traffic while commuting to and from work can get very nerve racking and frustrating. Delays and bottlenecks cause one to be late for work, reducing your productivity for that day, leading us to think how we are wasting time. Driving aggressively usually involves tailgating, excessive speeding, failing to signal on lane changes, running a traffic light or passing on the right side.
- **DON'T DRIVE WHEN YOU'RE TIRED-**
Fatigue or drowsy driving may be involved in 100,000 crashes each year, resulting in 40,000 injuries and 1550 deaths each year. These figures are only a "tip of the iceberg," since these crashes are seriously under reported. It is imperative that we stay sober, well rested, alert and cognizant of the road so that we can defend ourselves against those drivers that aren't prepared.
- **TRAIN YOUNG DRIVERS-**
According to facts, 16 to 20 year olds cause a significant highway safety problems on our highways. Traffic crashes are the leading cause of fatalities for teens. Historically, this group is the age group that has the lowest rate of seatbelt use and is the most likely to engage in risky driving behavior that includes alcohol, speeding, drug-impaired, and drowsiness. It is important for employers with young drivers to actively promote safe driving practices.

Motor vehicle crashes cost employers \$60 million each year in medical care, legal expenses, property damage, and lost productivity.

The crashes drive the cost of benefits, workers' compensation, social security and health insurance premiums out of sight. This is the reason that we at all levels in the university system should pay special attention to these safe practices.

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Excerpts: www.kci.org
www.osha.gov

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