Driver Safety Topic

This section addresses general driver safety in motor vehicles including avoidable accidents and distracted driving.

In the United Sates, motor vehicle accidents are the number one cause of death among all workers. Distracted driving and defensive driving are two ways a driver can make significant changes in driving habits. Distracted driving is defined as any non- driving activity a driver engages in that has the potential to distract them from the primary act of driving and increases the risk of crashing. While defensive driving is "…driving to save lives, time, and money, in spite of the conditions around you and the actions of others…" as defined by the National Safety Council.

10 Ways to Drive Defensively and Avoid Accidents

- Avoid the fast lane, the center lane(s) allow more escape options should a problem arise
- Keep your eyes scanning the area at least 3 car lengths ahead
- Beware of your vehicles blind spots.
- Maintain control of the wheel by sitting a proper distance (arms length) from the wheel
- Place your hands at 9 and 3
- Steer clear of vehicles noticeably having a difficult time staying center in the lane
- Be familiar with your particular vehicle (i.e. braking time)
- Keep vehicle in good running condition
- Avoid driving at late night or early morning (11pm-4am).
- Be informed by taking a defensive driving class

According to the Department of Transportation (DOT) there are three main types of distracted driving. They are: visual distraction- taking your eyes off the wheel, manual distraction- taking your hands off the wheel and cognitive distraction- taking your mind off of what you're doing.

Distracting Driving Activities

- Using a cell phone
- Eating and drinking
- Talking to passengers
- Grooming
- Reading, including maps
- Using a PDA or navigation system
- Watching a video
- Changing radio stations, CD’s or MP3 Players