Driver Safety – Stats and Facts



DID YOU KNOW?

Millions of workers drive or ride in a vehicle as part of their jobs, and motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of work-related deaths in the United States.[1] All workers are at risk of crashes, whether they drive light or heavy vehicles, or whether driving is a main or incidental job duty.

Motor vehicle crashes are the 1st or 2nd leading cause of death in every major industry group.[1]

In 2017, 1,299 U.S. workers driving or riding in a motor vehicle on a public road died in a work-related crash (25% of all work-related deaths).[3]

- Among these 1,299 deaths, the Transportation and Warehousing industry had the highest share (40%), followed by Construction (11%), Wholesale and Retail Trade (9%), and Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting (7%).
- The highest proportion of roadway fatalities involved semi, tractor-trailer, and tanker trucks (38%), followed by pickup trucks (14%), delivery trucks/vans (11%) and automobiles (9%).[4]

An additional 522 deaths in 2017 (10% of all work-related deaths) involved workers driving or riding in a motor vehicle off a public road, or pedestrians struck by motor vehicles.[3]

Work-related MVCs are not just an issue for truck, bus, or taxi drivers. 55% of workers who died in 2017 were not employed in motor vehicle operator jobs.[5]

Of the 313 pedestrian worker fatalities in 2017, 47% occurred in just a few occupations: heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers, construction occupations (trades workers, laborers, and highway maintenance), and grounds maintenance workers.

More than 1 in 3 long-haul truck drivers have experienced a serious truck crash during their career.[6]

Crash deaths of occupants of large trucks (above 10,000 pounds) are increasing. Between 2012 and 2015, the number of deaths held steady at 650 to 700 deaths per year, but between 2015 and 2017, the number increased from 665 to 841 – a 26% increase.[7]

The number of large trucks registered and large-truck miles driven are also increasing, as are overall large-truck crash rates based on miles driven.[7]

Texas had by far the highest number of large-truck occupant deaths in 2017 (129), followed by California (53), Florida, and Georgia (45 each). These four states accounted for almost 1/3 of all deaths.[7]

In 2017, 3% of large-truck drivers involved in fatal crashes had a blood-alcohol content (BAC) of .08 or more, compared to 21% of passenger-car drivers.[7]

Heavy- and tractor-trailer truck drivers have the highest numbers of pedestrian deaths of any occupation: 64 in 2017.

Motor vehicle crashes cause over 50% of work-related deaths in the oil and gas extraction industry.[4]

Historically, the greatest numbers of oil & gas workers killed in crashes each year were in a pick-up truck. In 2017, large trucks became the most common type of vehicle.

Traffic crashes are the number one cause of on the job deaths in America. 2 of every 5 people killed at work die in a workplace vehicle accident. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics more than 1,766 deaths a year result from occupational transportation incidents. That number is more than 38% of the 4,547 annual number of fatalities from occupational injuries. These workplace vehicle accident statistics are scary.

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 accidents happen during work. And many happen traveling to and from work. To keep workers safe, employers should implement a safe driving program at work.

Employers Should Set Up a Safe Driving Program to Keep Employees Safe on the Road

A safe driving program can save lives. Workplace vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death for workers of all ages. The impact of losing a loved one can be far reaching. Kids may never be the same after losing a parent. Spouses may not recover from losing their loved one.

The employer program should work to keep the driver and others the road safe. The program must work to change driver attitudes, improve behavior, and increase skills to build a safe culture. Employers should instruct employees on basic safe driving practices. Employers should reward safety-conscious behavior driving.

Employees are an employer’s most valuable assets. Workplace driver safety programs make good business sense and demonstrate that employers care about their employees. By implementing safe driving programs, an employer can help save lives.

You have the Right to a Safe Workplace

Workers have a right to a safe workplace. The law requires employers to provide employees with safe and healthful workplaces. OSHA recommends a 10 step driving safety program to help save lives on the road. Employers are prohibited by law from retaliating against employees for exercising their rights under the law. An employer cannot fire you or demote you for expressing a safety concern. You also cannot be fired for reporting an injury.

KEEP IN MIND

Driver safety is important for people of all ages. While many older people are skilled and experienced drivers, age-related changes can make driving more challenging.

As we age, it’s important that we re-evaluate our driving skills on a regular basis. Learning about how age can affect our driving can help, and so can brushing up on our safe driving skills.

Over 14,000 road collisions between 2008 and 2011 may have been work related. The figures include as many as 4,672 vans, trucks and buses. A further 9,427 collisions involving private cars could also have been work related.

Driving for work

includes any person who drives on a road as part of their work either in:

- A vehicle provided by their employer; or
- Their own vehicle and receives an allowance or payment from their employer for distances driven.

Commuting to work is not generally classified as driving for work, except where the person’s journey starts from their home and they are travelling to a work location that is not their normal place of work.

In the case of journeys taken in a vehicle provided an employer, such as a van, jeep or fleet car, an employer has a duty of care to ensure the safety of employees using the vehicle. Employers should have appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure safety when employees drive a work-provided vehicle or drive their own vehicle for work.

Driving for work involves a risk not only for drivers, but also for fellow workers and members of the public, such as pedestrians and other road users. As an employer or self-employed person, you must, by law, manage the risks that may arise when you or your employees drive for work. Employers should have systems in place to ensure that Driving for Work activities are road safety compliant. Employers cannot directly control roadway conditions, but they can promote and influence safe driving behaviour and actions by their employees.

The NIOSH Center for Motor Vehicle Safety (CMVS) provides research-based guidance to prevent motor vehicle crashes for:

- Truck drivers
- Drivers in other high-risk jobs (EMS, law enforcement, oil and gas extraction)
- Light-vehicle drivers (real estate, sales, health care)

Tips for Employees Who Drive

Employers have important obligations to protect employees, including when employees are operating a motor vehicle in the course of their work. But, in very practical terms, road safety is a shared responsibility.

The driving environment is dynamic – road, weather and traffic conditions change frequently. It’s tough to write a policy or procedure to address every possible event a driver may encounter. Your employer is relying on you to conscientiously apply your training, driving skills and good judgement plus the procedures explained in the road

safety plan. More importantly, your family and friends are counting on you to arrive home safely at the end of each day.

Here are some important things every driver needs to consider.

Before You Drive

- Manage journeys – Ask yourself if you can get your work done without driving. Can you use a phone call, an email, an online meeting to avoid unnecessary driving? Can you reduce risks by using public transit?
- Taxis and ride-hailing services are travel options you can use to eliminate some of the driving you do. Use the suggested practices in this tip sheet to ensure a safe trip.
- If you need to drive, prepare for the trip. Even if it’s a short trip, TripCheck is a handy online tool to help you get ready for the trip ahead.
- Prepare yourself – Are you well-rested, alert and confident to reach your destination?
- Prepare a trip plan – Check the route you intend to travel and scope out an alternate route just in case. Check traffic and road conditions. Set up a check-in contact, and share your plan with your supervisor.
- Prepare your vehicle – Are the seat, mirrors and headrest adjusted for you? Do a pre-trip inspection to confirm everything is working properly. Is the maintenance up to date? If you don’t think the vehicle is up to the trip, talk to your supervisor.

While You Drive

It’s up to you to know the rules and make sure you follow them.

- Wear your seatbelt.
- Take a break from driving at least once every two hours. Stretch your legs. Have a quick walk. Rehydrate.
- Pay attention and avoid distractions. Don’t use a cell phone or adjust the GPS while driving. When you’re behind the wheel, driving is your only job.
- Drive for the conditions. Speed limits are set for optimal driving conditions. Adjust your speed so that it’s right for you and your vehicle in those conditions.

After You Drive

- Report any vehicle damage or required maintenance.
- Share information about unsafe routes or things to watch out for so your colleagues don’t encounter the same problems, are better prepared or can make other adjustments like timing.

Distracted driving

According to ICBC, approximately 960 crashes occur every day in B.C., many of which are caused by distracted or inattentive driving. Attitudes towards the risk represented by distracted driving, and the use of electronic devices such as cellphones, are the leading causes of distraction-related crashes and near misses. Employers are responsible for preventing the use of cellphones and other electronic devices while their workers are driving on the job.

The risk

Distractions create situations and hazards that can be prevented. When combined with a constantly-changing road environment, performing other tasks while driving can result in errors that can have tragic results.

Reducing the risk

There are four things employers can do to reduce the risk of distracted driving on the job:

Create a policy and safe work practices

Create a policy and safe work practices that clearly spell out the expectations on the use of electronic devices.

Communicate the policy and practices

Provide your workers with the necessary information, instruction and training, and supervision. Communicate the policy and practices to your managers, workers, and contractors – often. Let them know that they can't talk on the phone or text while driving for work.

Support your workers

Tell your customers that staff can't answer calls or texts while driving. Have your workers create an "I'm behind the wheel" voice message before they begin driving.

Set an example

Never use an electronic handheld device or adjust a GPS unit while you're driving.

Working in and around traffic

Roadside work, or working in the "cone zone," is dangerous. From 2010 to 2019 in B.C., 13 roadside workers were killed and 204 were injured and missed time from work as a result of being hit by a motor vehicle.

Roadside worksites involve hundreds of activities – not just road construction. There are many types of workers in the cone zone, including:

- First responders
- Landscapers
- Municipal workers
- Telecommunications and utility workers
- Tow truck drivers
- Traffic control persons
- Truck drivers

Road Safety Toolkit

Resources for employers, supervisors and workers to help keep workers safe when working in and around traffic.

Cone Zone campaign

The Cone Zone campaign runs from May to August each year. This campaign aims to reduce the number of deaths and injuries of roadside workers by increasing awareness of the vulnerability of these workers and encouraging drivers to practice safe driving behaviour in the cone zone.

Driving while fatigued is a significant road safety concern. Specific findings vary, however studies in Canada and several other countries show that driver fatigue is a contributing factor in 15-30% of all vehicle crashes*.

If your employees drive for work, these pages explain what fatigue is, why it is so hazardous and who is at risk. As well, there are ideas and resources to help you decide on the measures you can apply to reduce the risks of fatigue-related crashes in your organization.

If driving is one of your work responsibilities, information below also explains how to recognize when fatigue is affecting your driving abilities, and several practical things you can do to fight fatigue.

Fatigue Basics

This section provides statistics that illustrate how significant of a road safety issue fatigue has become, defines and describes driving fatigue, and explains the primary factors that contribute to fatigue.

Impacts and Risk Groups

Look here to learn about physiological impacts of fatigue, and how they impair a driver’s ability to perform safely and reliably. Some individuals and groups are at greater risk of becoming fatigued; find out if you or your employees fit those categories.

Tools and Resources for Employers

See practical guidance that will help you recognize a fatigued employee, and the things you can do to reduce fatigue-related risks for your driving employees. Find out about fatigue monitoring devices, and Fatigue Risk Management Systems that have become mandatory in some jurisdictions.

Tools and Resources for Employees

Learn how to recognize the signs and determine if you are becoming fatigued. Read about the practical ways by which you can reduce your fatigue risks, plus the simple steps you can take to combat fatigue in your own workplace on wheels.