



Transportation Times

www.tricorinsurance.com

Thomas Osterholz
Safety Consulting Manager

(800) 491-8856, ext. 1332
tosterholz@tricornet.com

Mary Schoettel
Safety Consultant

(800) 397-3351, ext. 1534
mschoettel@tricornet.com

Alyssa Moen
Safety Consultant

(800) 491-8856, ext. 1331
amoen@tricornet.com



Safety Consulting

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DOT RELEASES WEBSITE ADDRESSING DISTRACTED DRIVING ISSUES



United States Department of Transportation (US DOT) Secretary Ray LaHood announced a new DOT website dedicated to informing the public of the dangers of distracted driving. A presidential Executive Order also became effective December 30 restricting more than four million federal employees from texting and using communications devices while driving government vehicles. Secretary LaHood indicated that this shows that the DOT is taking the lead in taking responsibility for keeping the nation's roads safe. Among the website features are: statistics and facts about distracted driving; press releases from DOT on the issue; individual state laws; and answers to questions (FAQ). To access the site, go to: <http://www.distraction.gov>.

CVSA CITES "MIXED RESULTS" FOR OPERATION SAFE DRIVER CAMPAIGN

The Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) released the results of its October 18-24, 2009, "Safe Driver Campaign" with a caution that more work is needed to educate passenger and commercial motor vehicle (CMV) drivers about operating their vehicles more safely. While CVSA was pleased that the campaign showed improvement over last year (with fewer drivers and vehicles with Out of Service (OOS) violations and fewer citations issued for roadside safety inspections of commercial motor vehicles), there was an increase in moving traffic violations for all drivers.

Some CMV details from the 2009 Campaign results include:

- 30,294 CMV Roadside Inspections resulted in 5.4% of the drivers being placed out-of-service;
- Citations for failure to obey a traffic control device were issued to 314 CMV drivers;
- Citations for speeding were issued to 1,373 CMV drivers;
- Failure to use a seat belt while operating a CMV were issued to 530 drivers;
- Size and weight violations resulted in 2,344 citations; and
- Violations of state/local laws resulted in 3,269 citations.
- The total number of CMV citations for all offenses were 8,067. A total of 6,887 warnings were also issued to drivers.

The campaign was created in 2007 by CVSA in partnership with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). For more information on CVSA, go to: www.cvsa.org





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"It's All About You"



HOURS OF SERVICE NEWS

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), in response to a legal challenge to the current hours of service (HOS) regulations, will completely rewrite the 2008 HOS regulations. The agency will issue a proposed rulemaking within 9 months and a new Final Rule in less than two years. This settlement is in response to a legal challenge brought against FMCSA by Public Citizen, Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, the Truck Safety Coalition and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. In March 2009, the groups asked a D.C. Appeals court to throw out the HOS rule. The March 2009 challenge was the third challenge to the Bush Administration's HOS rules.

Figures from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) clearly demonstrate that the trucking industry is now the safest it has been since the DOT began keeping crash statistics in 1975. The number of truck-involved fatalities on our highways has *decreased* by 19 percent since the new HOS rules took effect. The number of injuries has *decreased* by 13 percent since 2004. These substantial safety improvements came at a time when the number of registered large trucks operating on our highways increased by hundreds of thousands of trucks and the number of miles driven by large trucks increased by more than 2 billion miles.

Click here for the new [Interstate Truck Driver's Guide to Hours of Service](#).



FMCSA ANNOUNCES NEW DRIVER PRE-EMPLOYMENT SCREENING PROGRAM

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) announced that it will launch a new Driver Pre-Employment Screening Program which will allow commercial motor carrier companies to electronically access driver inspection and crash records as a part of the hiring process. The program is expected to begin in December 2009.

"Safety is our number one priority at the Department of Transportation. This new initiative will help trucking companies ensure the safest drivers are behind the wheel of commercial trucks and buses," said Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. "Making this information more transparent will make our roads and highways safer for everyone."

By using driver safety information during pre-employment screening, motor carriers will be able to better assess potential safety risks of a prospective driver-employee, and drivers will have additional opportunities to verify the data in their driving history and correct any discrepancies.

Commercial driver safety records are currently available to federal and state law enforcement personnel, and accessible to drivers through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Once the pre-employment screening program is launched, driver safety records will be readily available to motor carriers regardless of state or jurisdiction. In accordance with federal privacy laws, drivers must first give written consent in order for their records to be released.

The Driver Pre-Employment Screening Program will be populated by FMCSA's Motor Carrier Management Information System (MCMIS). The MCMIS is comprised of driver performance data including roadside inspection and compliance review results, enforcement data, state-reported crashes, and motor carrier census data.

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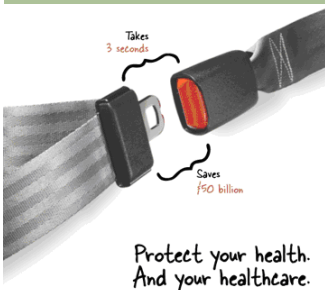
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Let us know...

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions about the safety newsletter please let us know, we'd love to hear from you!!

"It's All About You"

The Top 10 Worst Foods To Eat While Driving

Source: Safety Exchange John Navroth

Numerous studies suggest that using a cell phone while driving causes distractions that increase the risks of traffic accidents. While information of this nature is certainly valuable, we should also remember the multitude of other distracting things drivers do when they should be keeping their eyes on the road. For instance, did you know that eating while driving is considered even more dangerous than talking on a cell phone?

The Dangers of a Distracted Driver

That's right. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), in concert with the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, eating while driving is one of the most distracting things a driver can do.

It's been estimated that 80% of crashes and 65% of near-crashes involve some element of driver distraction. "Distraction was most likely to be involved in rear-end collisions in which the lead vehicle was stopped, as well as in single-vehicle crashes", says the NHTSA.

The NHTSA also indicate that eating is a significant negative factor in a driver's reaction time. Since it is widely recognized that most crashes can be avoided if the driver had just one additional second to react, taking a bite of your breakfast burrito on your commute to work takes on a whole new meaning.

Top 10 Foods to Avoid While Driving

Even the insurance industry warns against the pitfalls of eating and driving. For instance, insurance.com has released their "Top 10 Foods to Avoid While Driving". They remind drivers that by cutting back on everyday driving distractions that lead to crashes and tickets, you can save big dollars on your insurance premium. Oddly enough, according to a 2008 Nationwide Mutual study, only 3% of respondents admitted that eating was the most dangerous driving distraction.

Nevertheless, the folks at insurance.com advise avoiding the practice, especially hot, greasy, and gooey foods and drink. In addition they identify the following as being the Top 10 to stay away from:

1. Chocolate (Qualifies for the "gooey" category)
2. Soda (Tilting your head back to drink a soda could lose you the aforementioned extra second)
3. Jelly donuts (Another "gooey" candidate)
4. Fried chicken (Grease on the fingers= a greasy steering wheel)
5. Ribs and wings (Wouldn't you rather enjoy these sitting down at a table?)
6. Hamburgers (It's hard to wait to get back to the office with a double-meat, double-cheese sitting in the seat next to you)
7. Chili dogs (The problem here is obvious)
8. Tacos (If you're going to eat tacos while driving, go with the soft; crispy shells are harder to manage)
9. Soup (Liquid + hot= potential disaster) And, what's the most common dangerous food for drivers? It's actually another beverage . . .
10. Coffee (There are just so many things that can go wrong with a cup a' joe, even if you use a cup holder)

Conclusion

Like you, I can think of a few others that should have been on the list, such as ice cream and French fries. But, let's face it, everything you do other than paying attention to your driving is a distraction, whether it be conversing with a fellow passenger, adjusting your seat or mirrors, or looking for the eject button on your CD player. Like all other safety hazards, the more risks you add, the more likely trouble can be – in this case – literally right around the corner.