

How to Prevent Roadway Crashes FactSheet

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Courtesy of Centers for Disease Control/James Gathany

Between 1992 and 2001, 13,337 workers died in roadway crashes, an average of four deaths each day. Roadway crashes led all other causes, making up 22% of workplace deaths, compared with 13% from homicides and 10% from falls, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries.

In 2000, lost wages and benefits for crash victims (occupational and non-occupational) were \$61 billion. Costs to employers due to the loss or absence of an employee from work accounted for \$4.6 billion more (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration). For the employers and victims, a workplace crash can have far-reaching financial, medical, and legal consequences.

Who is at risk?

Anyone who operates a motor vehicle as part of his or her job is at risk of being involved in a roadway crash.

In 2001, nearly 4.2 million U.S. workers were motor vehicle operators; 73% were truck drivers. Roadway crashes are by far the leading cause of death for transport workers. Millions of other workers who are not full-time professional drivers operate company or personal vehicles for deliveries, sales and repair calls, client visits, and many other tasks. Roadway crashes are also the leading cause of death for workers in clerical and professional specialty jobs, and the second leading cause for executives, sales workers, and technicians.

What can an employer do?

Unlike other workplaces, the roadway is not a closed environment. Preventing work-related roadway crashes requires strategies that combine traffic safety principles and sound safety management practices. Although employers cannot control roadway conditions, they can promote safe driving behavior by providing safety information to workers and by setting and enforcing driver safety policies. Crashes are not an unavoidable part of doing business. Employers can take steps to protect their employees and their companies:

Policies

- Assign a key member of the management team responsibility and authority to set and enforce comprehensive driver safety policy.
- Enforce mandatory seat belt use.
- Do not require workers to drive irregular hours or far beyond their normal working hours.
- Do not require workers to conduct business on a cell phone while driving.
- Develop work schedules that allow employees to obey speed limits and to follow applicable hours-of-service regulations.

Fleet Management

- Adopt a structured vehicle maintenance program.
- Provide company vehicles that offer the highest possible levels of occupant protection.

Safety Programs

- Teach workers strategies for recognizing and managing driver fatigue and in-vehicle distractions.
- Provide training to workers operating specialized motor vehicles or equipment.
- Emphasize to workers the need to follow safe driving practices on and off the job.

Driver Performance

- Ensure that workers assigned to drive on the job have a valid driver's license that is appropriate for the type of vehicle to be driven.
- Check driving records of prospective employees, and perform periodic rechecks after hiring.
- Maintain complete and accurate records of workers' driving performance.

This publication was produced with information from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Texas Workers' Compensation Commission.

The Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation has the following publications to provide safety information to help prevent roadway crashes:

- Fleet Motor Safety Program
- How Risky is Your Driving at Work?
- Are you Road Ready? Checklist
- Building a Highway Safety Program
- Vehicle Checklist
- Driving Distractions
- Road Rage
- Defensive Driving
- Driver Fatigue and Road Trance

The Texas Department of Insurance,
Division of Workers' Compensation (TDI/DWC)
E-mail **resourcecenter@tdi.state.tx.us**
or call 1-800-687-7080 for more information.

Safety Violations Hotline
1-800-452-9595
safetyhotline@tdi.state.tx.us