Transportation Safety Accident Prevention I

In the United States motor vehicle crashes of all types are the leading cause of lost work time and on-the-job fatalities. Driver distractions, driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs, and excessive speed are three of the leading causes of accidents.

Distraction happens when a driver is slow to recognize a potential hazard because something inside or outside the vehicle draws the driver’s attention away from the road. Approximately 25% of crashes are distraction related. Young drivers less than 20 years old have the highest percentage of distracted driving crashes.

Typical distractions include:

- Cell phones
- Adjusting the radio, CD player
- Eating or drinking
- Talking to a passenger
- Reacting to conditions outside the vehicle
- Attending to children
- Attempting to read while driving

For information on accident prevention, please contact Employers Association, Inc. at 763-253-9100.
During 2005, 16,885 people in the U.S. died in alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes, representing 39% of all traffic-related deaths. In 2005, nearly 1.4 million drivers were arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics. That's less than one percent of the 159 million self-reported episodes of alcohol-impaired driving among U.S. adults each year.

Male drivers involved in fatal motor vehicle crashes are almost twice as likely as female drivers to be intoxicated with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.08% or greater. It is illegal to drive with a BAC of 0.08% or higher in all 50 states.

In 2005, 16% of drivers ages 16 to 20 who died in motor vehicle crashes had been drinking alcohol.

Of the 1,946 traffic fatalities among children ages 0 to 14 years in 2005, 21% involved alcohol.

Each year, alcohol-related crashes in the United States cost about $51 billion.

**Some prevention strategies include:**
- "Zero tolerance" laws for drivers under 21 years of age
- Implement more sobriety checkpoints
- Stronger state DUI prevention activities
- School-based education programs to reduce riding with a drinking driver
- Mandatory substance abuse assessment and treatment for driving-under-the-influence offenders
- Reducing the legal limit for blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to 0.05%

Excessive speed is a factor in 30% of all fatal crashes. About 1,000 fatalities result from speeding-related motor vehicle traffic crashes every month.

**Excessive speed:**
- Reduces a driver’s ability to steer safely around curves or objects in the roadway
- Extends the distance necessary to stop a vehicle
- Increases the distance a vehicle travels while a driver reacts to a dangerous situation

About 40 percent of speeding-related fatalities occurs on a curve. Male drivers are more likely to be involved in speeding-related fatal crashes than female drivers among drivers of all ages. About 41 percent of intoxicated drivers (BAC= 0.08+) involved in fatal crashes were speeding.

**Some speed reduction strategies include:**
- Increased enforcement of speed-related violations
- Use of portable radar trailers displaying the speed of passing vehicles
- Placement of speed reduction signs
- Education programs in the community and at high schools and colleges