

FACE THE FACTS

HAZ ALERT



To prevent motor vehicle injuries while working:

- Employers should provide mandatory comprehensive employee driver safety training programs including recognition of symptoms of driver distraction/ inattention and driver fatigue.
- Employees should avoid distractions and wear seat belts at all times.
- Don't place yourself in a potentially hazardous situation. Drivers should always stay alert and practice defensive driving techniques.

Dying to Drive- Occupational Motor Vehicle Collisions in Kentucky

Since 1994, there have been an average of 37 fatal occupational motor vehicle collisions (MVCs) per year in Kentucky. As of October 2003, 25 workers have died in MVCs.

Ten of these fatalities occurred when the driver left the road. Below are summaries of 4 fatal MVC incidents.

In the first case, a prison worker fell asleep while patrolling the perimeter of a prison. The vehicle hit a tree after traveling downhill 60 feet from the road. The incident happened in the early morning hours; the worker had started his shift at midnight. He had been employed for less than a month and was not wearing a seatbelt.

The second case involved a semi truck that crossed the median and struck another semi truck in the oncoming lane, pushing it over a guardrail and down an embankment. The semi truck driver who caused the collision died while the other semi truck driver, who was pushed off the highway, survived. Four other vehicles were involved in the crash. A



driver in a passenger car was struck by debris and also died. The semi truck driver was considered unconscious at the time of the incident but no evidence of drugs, alcohol, or heart disease was present. No mechanical problems or adverse weather conditions were evident

A semi truck that left the roadway and struck an earthen embankment resulted in the death of a third worker. The semi overturned and the driver was trapped. The cause of the collision was attributed to loss of vehicle control. No drugs, alcohol, or heart disease were present.

A business owner who was a vehicle passenger en route to an auction died in a fourth fatal incident. The vehicle left the roadway for unknown reasons and the decedent was ejected from the vehicle.

**IF YOU FEEL DROWSY WHILE DRIVING,
PULL OFF THE ROADWAY AS SOON AS
POSSIBLE AND SLEEP.**

Employers Should Provide Mandatory Comprehensive Employee Driver Safety Training Programs Including Recognition of Symptoms of Driver Distraction/ Inattention and Driver Fatigue.

Driver safety education programs should include the following points.

For safe driving¹, drivers should:

1) Plan trips with rest areas in mind; 2) Know how much sleep you need before a trip; 3) Take power naps; 4) Take frequent breaks; 5) Recognize signs of fatigue and pull off the road as soon as possible.

Drivers may be fatigued when: 1) You start yawning and your eyelids feel heavy; 2) Your mind is wandering; 3) You don't remember driving the last few miles; 4) You feel slow; 5) You start missing highway driving markers such as signs, ramps, and landmarks.

If you recognize any of these symptoms of fatigue, it is time for a break or a nap.

Employees Should Avoid Distractions and Wear Seat Belts At All Times.

While driving, you should²: 1) Avoid eating and drinking (especially hot liquids like coffee) because of the possibility of being distracted by falling food, reaching for food or choking; 2) Plan primary driving and alternate driving routes to avoid looking at maps while driving; 3) Keep all music within easy reach and adjust during normal stops;

4) Don't answer the phone. Return calls at your next rest area when the vehicle is fully Stopped; 5) Avoid arguments and distracting conversations while driving; 6) Wear your seat belt until the vehicle is completely stopped.

Don't Place Yourself in a Potentially Hazardous Situation. Drivers Should Always Stay Alert and Practice Defensive Driving Techniques.

Drivers should³: 1) Recognize other potentially hazardous drivers by assuming they will make a mistake; 2) Conduct ongoing hazard assessments by scanning ahead and behind; 3) Think of your fellow driver 4) Plan ahead and expect the unexpected; 5) Stay alert and focused on your surroundings; 6) Drive at speeds appropriate for the roadway; 7) Conduct a routine maintenance check of tires, equipment and load.

References:

1. <http://www.safetyline.wa.gov.au/pagebin/mechhazd0043.pdf>
2. <http://www.accidentreconstruction.com/news/sep01/090501a.asp>
3. <http://ecsinc.com/RISKCTRL/HOT/Vol16is3/lesson.htm>

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