

## Danger—Road Hazards Ahead!



Workers are more likely to die from traffic-related motor vehicle crashes than from any other hazard on the job. There are more than 2,000 occupational motor vehicle deaths each year, which is more than 30 percent of the total annual number of occupational fatalities.

Dangerous habits include speeding, tailgating, illegal passing, weaving through traffic, and ignoring traffic signs and signals. Road rage is perhaps the most extreme example of reckless driving. There are also distracted drivers who eat and drink, apply make-up, check maps, or read and write. We often hear about the dangers of cell phone use. However, long conversations with other passengers can also cause drivers to be less careful.

Using alcohol or illegal drugs causes many tragic accidents. Using prescription medications or over-the-counter cold remedies can also cause drivers to be less alert. Many accidents happen because overtired drivers simply fall asleep at the wheel.

**Never** be the one guilty of these dangerous driving hazards.

**Always** drive defensively to avoid other drivers who ignore safety at the wheel.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), seat belts save an estimated 9,500 lives in the United States each year. The agency estimates that three of five people killed in vehicle accidents would have survived their injuries had they been wearing their seat belts. Properly worn seat belts will prevent drivers and passengers from hitting the dashboard, steering wheel, and windshield when involved in an accident. The seat belt will also keep you inside the car, which increases your chance of survival. You are 25 times more likely to be killed if you are thrown from the vehicle during an accident.

Bad weather conditions are driving hazards that often cannot be avoided. Slick roads, difficulty in stopping, and poor visibility are just a few conditions created by bad weather conditions such as snow and ice, rain, fog, and severe winds.

Preparation is key—watch weather reports before taking trips.

Lighting conditions can be hazardous because of decreased visibility, decreased depth perception, and reduced peripheral vision. Dangerous times caused by hazardous lighting conditions include:

- Driving at night, especially on unlit highways or roads
- Driving at sunset or sunrise when the sun is on the horizon
- Driving in hot and glaring sun conditions

Poor vehicle maintenance can also contribute to accidents. Before each trip, do a quick inspection of your vehicle to make sure the basic safety equipment is in good operating condition.

Careful attention to all these common causes of accidents can help to keep you from becoming an NHTSA statistic.

