

For Your Safety: Driving - -The Most Dangerous Thing We Do

Whether you drive a vehicle for the company or just drive your own car to work, it is one of the most dangerous things you do on a daily basis. After years of driving, many of us take that task for granted and concentrate more on our cell phones, radios and what we are going to do when we reach our destination. Take a step back and think about the last time you were behind the wheel. What were you thinking about? Were you talking on the cell phone? How much time did you spend focused on just driving? If you think your driving skills are on auto pilot, take the following steps:

- Drive with the radio off.
- Turn off your cell phone. If you're too tempted to use it, put it in the trunk. .
- Practice safe following distances by leaving at least a two car gap between you and the car ahead of you.
- Drive the speed limit without using cruise control.
- Practice scanning your eyes further down the road to anticipate potential problems.
- Don't just look straight ahead. Hazards can be on all sides.

As you practice these steps, you will become more in tune with hazards on the roadway and be in a better position to react to them.

For Your Health: Seat Belt Facts

- Lap-shoulder belts reduce the risk of fatal injury to front-seat occupants by 45-73% depending on the type of vehicle and seating position involved. (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2002)
- Seat belts are credited with preventing 11,900 fatalities and 325,000 serious injuries annually. (NHTSA, 2003)
- If all passengers were to wear their seat belts, an additional 9,200 fatalities and 143,000 serious injuries could be prevented each year. (NHTSA, 2003)
- Six out of 10 children who died in passenger vehicle crashes were unbelted. (National Safety Council, 2002)
- The needless deaths and injuries that result from not using seat belts cost society an estimated \$26 billion annually in medical care, lost productivity, and other injury- related costs. (NHTSA, 2002)
- Average inpatient costs for traffic crash victims who did not use seat belts were 50% higher than for victims who were belted. (NSC, 2001)

For Your Information: Feb. 12-18 Is Child Passenger Safety Week

Do you have children that still ride in car seats? Take a moment this week to check the size and condition of their safety seats.

- Is the seat big enough? Kids grow fast, car seats do not.
- Is the seat tightly secured to the back seat? Straps can loosen over time.
- Inspect for cracked plastic and worn straps. Contact the manufacture for replacement parts.
- If you have any questions about the security or condition of the child safety seat, call the DOT Auto Safety Hotline at 888-DASH-2-DOT.

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