

Safety Newsletter



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IT GETS DARKER EARLIER – DRIVE SAFELY

Daylight Saving Time ends every year on the first Sunday in November. This means it starts to get darker earlier. As we set our clocks backward by one hour here are some tips for driving at night.”



The Most Dangerous Time to Drive. As we 'Fall Back' to shorter days, take extra care on the road. Shorter days, fatigue, compromised night vision, rush hour and impaired drivers all contribute to making driving at night more dangerous than any other time of day. In fact, the risk of a fatal crash is three times greater at night, according to National Safety Council.

Darkness. This time of year, many people will find themselves spending more time driving in the dark. Depth perception, color recognition and peripheral vision can be compromised in the dark, and the glare of headlights from an oncoming vehicle can temporarily blind a driver. Even with high-beam headlights on, visibility is limited to about 500 feet (250 feet for normal headlights) creating less time to react to something in the road, especially when driving at higher speeds. What should you do to combat darkness?

- Aim headlights correctly, and keep them clean
- Dim your dashboard
- Look away from oncoming lights
- If you wear glasses, choose anti-reflective lens.
- Clean the windshield to eliminate streaks
- Slow down to compensate for limited visibility and reduced stopping time

Compromised Night Vision. Night vision is the ability to see well in low-light conditions. As we age, we have greater difficulty seeing at night. A 50-year-old driver may need twice as much light to see as well as a 30-year-old. At age 60 and older, driving can become even more difficult, according to the American Optometric Association. Some older drivers also may have compromised vision due to cataracts and degenerative eye diseases. The AOA recommends older drivers:

- Have annual vision exams
- Reduce speed
- Take a driving course; even experienced drivers can benefit from a refresher course.
- Minimize distractions, like talking with passengers or listening to the radio
- Check with your doctor about side effects of prescription drugs
- Limit driving to daytime hours if necessary

Fatigue. A National Sleep Foundation poll says 60% of adults have driven while they were tired, and another 37%, or 103 million people, have fallen asleep at the wheel. Of those, 13% say they fall asleep while driving at least once a month, and 4% say they have caused a crash by falling asleep while driving. The reasons are many – shift work, lack of quality sleep, long work hours, sleep disorders – and it doesn't only happen on lengthy trips. These staggering numbers are backed up by a report by NHTSA that 100,000 police-reported crashes are a result of driver fatigue. Most crashes or near-misses happen at the times you would expect drivers to be tired: 4 to 6 a.m., midnight to 2 a.m. and 2 to 4 p. m. Drowsy driving puts everyone on the road at risk. Losing two hours of sleep has the same effect on driving as having three beers, and tired drivers are three times more likely to be in a car crash if they are fatigued. The National Sleep Foundation offers this advice:

- Get seven or more hours of sleep
- Don't drive if you've been awake for 24 hours or more
- Stop every two hours to rest
- Pull over and take a nap if you're drowsy
- Travel during times you are normally awake



Rush Hour. Evening rush hour (between 4 and 7 p.m. weekdays) is a dangerous time to drive due to crowded roadways and drivers eager to get home after work. In winter, it's dark during rush hour, compounding an already dangerous driving situation. How can you make it home safely during rush hour?

- Don't be an impatient driver; slow down
- Stay in your lane and beware of drivers who dart from lane to lane
- Even though the route may be familiar, don't go on autopilot; stay alert
- In unfamiliar areas, consult a map before you go. Memorize your route
- Don't touch your phone, eat, drink or do other things that are distracting

Impaired Drivers Nearly 30 people die every day in crashes that involve a driver impaired by alcohol, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Drivers impaired by prescription medicines and other drugs increase that number significantly. Impaired drivers are most frequently on the road after dark – particularly between the hours of midnight and 3 a.m. on weekends. While drunk driving has declined by

about one-third since 2007, the number of drivers under the influence of drugs has increased. Between 2013 and 2014, 22% of drivers tested positive for a drug that would cause impairment. NHTSA also found that the prevalence of THC (found in marijuana) among drivers on weekend nights increased 48% since 2007.

Stay Alert, Stay Alive. While we do only one quarter of our driving at night, 50% of traffic deaths happen at night. It doesn't matter whether the road is familiar or not, driving at night is always more dangerous. By taking some extra precautions, we can all contribute to reducing these numbers.

THE SCHOOL YEAR IS IN FULL SWING - SAFETY TIPS FOR EVERY EMPLOYEE

- Do not stand on chairs, tables, or desks to reach items or decorate your work area.
- Be constantly alert of any potential hazards in your work area such as moving equipment or machinery.
- Follow all safety rules or guidelines.
- Ensure you are properly trained on any equipment before attempting to operate.
- Always wear the proper attire for your assignment, including any personal protective equipment required.
- Familiarize yourself with the emergency exits where you are working.
- Utilize safe lifting practices. Test the load before lifting, keep the object close to your body, use your legs and not your back when lifting, and move your feet to avoid twisting while moving objects.

Remember, safety is everyone's responsibility. If you have questions about the safest way to perform a job, please contact your Supervisor.



SLIPS, TRIPS, AND FALLS

Now that you've asked yourself, "How many times are they going to go over this!" I'll tell you. As many times as it takes! Slips, trips, and falls continue to be the most reported type of injury in school districts. With Fall, the leaves are falling off the trees, the days are cooler and a little wetter. This is the perfect combination to create conditions that can lead to injuries from slipping and tripping. Sometimes you fall and sometimes you don't – but, almost always, there is an injury.

A heightened sense of awareness should always be used when walking. **SLOW DOWN** and keep your hands out of your pockets – you will have better balance! If forced to venture outdoors most folks will innately 'pick up the pace' and do so with their hands in their pockets. Slow Down!

The cost of injury due to slips, trips, and falls are not only the most reported employee injury - they are the most expensive, too. These injuries can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars each year. Think of the ripple effect of the injury. The injured employee loses time from work. This may cause other employees to have to work overtime to cover the injured worker's job duties. This increases the workload on fellow employees while leaving the school shorter staffed.. The increased workload could also have physical, mental, and emotional effects on the staff. OSHA reports that nearly half of the workplace injuries are sprains from slips and falls.



Although it is very difficult to list all foreseeable slip, trip, and fall hazards an employee might face, it is possible to create a shared responsibility of personal safety awareness. Here are some actions that we can take to protect ourselves as well as our fellow co-workers:

- Practice good housekeeping.
- If you find water pooled in a foot traffic area, notify someone who can take care of the condition..
- Notify your supervisor of slip and trip hazards if you cannot correct the condition.
- Use the handrails when going up or down stairs.
- Wear appropriate shoes with non-slip soles.
- Ensure that appropriate signage is used to alert staff of hazards.
- Show up for work mentally and physically prepared.
- Horseplay is never an option at work.

FALL WELLNESS TIP-FIGHT THE FLU

From illnesses to injuries, there are several climate changes that happen in the fall that might have a direct impact on your health and wellness. Take some precautions to protect yourself!

Short for influenza, the flu is a contagious illness that infects the nose, throat, lungs and a range of complications like sinus and ear infections. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there are three actions you can take to fight the flu:



- Wash your hands regularly
- Avoid close contact with sick people
- Wear appropriate clothes outdoors (coats, jackets, scarves, gloves, etc.)

A yearly vaccine can provide protection against complications from the flu. If you do find yourself sick with the flu this fall season, make sure you talk to your doctor about steps you should take in order to get well soon.