



## Death On Our Highways: Workers in Peril

If you're out of the office and on the road when you're on the job, keep in mind that you are still at risk for a work-related injury -- a traffic accident. Roughly 2,000 people are killed each year in work-related highway driving accidents. From 1992 to 2001, nearly 14,000 civilian workers were killed in roadway crashes. In fact, roadway crashes were the number one cause of death for U.S. workers, accounting for 22 percent of all fatalities.

With over 210 million vehicles registered in the United States, it shouldn't be surprising that a large number of them are used for work-related driving. Also consider that 4.2 million people work full-time while on the road. For these people, most accidents while on the job can only occur in one way -- in a traffic accident. And many of these people are in jobs other than trucking or transportation. Roadway crashes are the number two cause of death among executives, sales workers and technicians.

These tragic accidents have an economic cost to employers as well as employees. An injured employee loses wages she could have had if she wasn't injured, which means an employer loses productivity from that employee being off the job. In 2000, lost wages and benefits alone cost employees \$61 billion dollars. Employer costs were in excess of \$4 billion dollars, including lawsuits that stem from work-related driving accidents.

The good news is that there are ways to minimize these accidents. Safe vehicular operation begins outside the vehicle with the employer and carries over inside the vehicle with the employee. Together, they can make our roads a much safer place.

### Employees

- Attend all driver safety workshops
- Wear seat belts at all time
- Keep reasonable and safe distance behind other vehicles
- In the event of developing hazard, apply brakes gradually
- Be aware of road conditions; heat, rain, snow and ice
- Keep track of traffic by looking far down the road
- Be attentive to surroundings; keeps eyes moving to spot problems before you reach them
- Check review mirrors frequently
- No cell phone use while driving; pull over to side of road to make any calls
- Signal lanes changes early as well as any turns

