

SAFETY MATTERS



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Motor Vehicle Accidents

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Did you know?

Motor vehicle crashes remain the leading cause of work-related fatalities. According to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, half of all motor vehicle accidents are attributed to inattention and mental lapses. The average vehicle crash costs an employer more than \$16,000, \$74,000 when there is an employee injury and up to \$500,000 if there is a fatality.

Accident Factors

1. Fatigue

Studies show that fatigue is a primary or secondary factor in 15% of fatal crashes. Fatigue affects almost all elements you need to drive safely:

- Reflexes
- Concentration
- Mood
- Judgement
- Alertness

To manage this risk, get adequate rest, eat well balanced meals and take periodic rest breaks along with walking. Pull over and take a quick nap when feeling tired.

2. Weather

There are rules we can follow to drive safely in extreme weather, which include adjusting driving to current conditions:

- Start drive earlier and allow extra time; this will reduce stress level and allow for slower, safer driving.
- Turn on your lights so you can see better and other drivers can see you better.
- Slow down and match speed to conditions.
- Stay alert and watch out for other drivers and hazardous conditions.
- Increase following distance from 2 seconds to at least 4 seconds.
- Get off the road to a safe place, such as a rest stop, if weather conditions get so bad that it is unsafe to continue.

IMPORTANT POINTS

- Motor vehicle crashes remain the leading cause of work-related fatalities.
- Three factors that contribute to motor vehicle accidents are: fatigue, weather and distracted driving.
- Minimize the risk of crashes at work by developing a fleet safety program.

For more safety resources, visit [NFIB.com/safetymatters](https://www.nfib.com/safetymatters)

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3. Distracted Driving

Distracted driving is a dangerous epidemic on our roadways. Thousands of people die every year in crashes related to texting and driving. The fight to end distracted driving starts with a commitment to drive phone-free (www.distraction.gov). To manage this risk, never text or talk on the phone while driving.

- Protect lives by never texting or talking on the phone while driving.
- Be a good passenger and speak out if the driver is distracted.
- Encourage friends and family to drive phone-free.

Motor Vehicle Accident Prevention

Auto accidents are largely preventable. By developing a fleet safety program, one can minimize the risk of crashes at work:

- Management involvement: like any good safety program, involve owners, top managers as well as workers.
- Written policy: have a clear, comprehensive and enforceable set of procedures and share with all employees.
- Driver agreement: establish a contract with employees who drive for work. In signing the agreement, the employee acknowledges awareness and understanding of policies and expectations.
- Motor vehicle record checks: check driving records and screen out those with poor records as they are the most likely to cause problems.
- Reporting and investigating: establish a process for reporting any crash to a supervisor right away.
- Vehicle selection, maintenance and inspection: provide vehicles with exceptional safety features and establish a preventative maintenance plan.
- Disciplinary action: set a course of action for violations and preventable crashes.
- Driver training: training and safe driving should be communicated and provided on an ongoing basis.