

CONNER STRONG & BUCKELEW

UTILITY & TRANSPORTATION CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION
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RISKINSIGHTS

SAFETY SOLUTIONS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

PREVENTING WORK-RELATED ROADWAY CRASHES

According to the 2006 Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI), fatal highway incidents remained the most frequent type of fatal workplace event, accounting for 2,413 deaths in 2006; almost a six percent increase from the previous year. From 1992 – 2001, roadway crashes led all other causes, making up 22% of workplace deaths, compared with 13% from homicide and 10% from falls (Bureau of Labor Statistics, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries).

In 2000, lost wages and benefits for crash victims (occupational and non-occupational) were $61 billion. Costs to employers due to the loss or absence of an employee from work accounted for $4.6 billion more (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration). For employers and victims, a workplace crash can have far-reaching financial, medical and legal consequences.

WHO IS AT RISK?

Anyone who operates a motor vehicle as part of his or her job is at risk of being involved in a roadway crash.

In 2001, nearly 4.2 million U.S. workers were motor vehicle operators; 73% were truck drivers. Roadway crashes are by far the leading cause of death for transport workers. Millions of other workers who are not full-time professional drivers operate company or personal vehicles for deliveries, sales and repair calls, client visits, and many other tasks. Roadway crashes are also the leading cause of death for workers in clerical and professional specialty jobs, and the second leading cause for executives, sales workers, and technicians. (Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey and Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries)

WHAT CAN EMPLOYERS DO?

Unlike other workplaces, the roadway is not a closed environment. Preventing work-related roadway crashes requires strategies that combine traffic safety principles and sound safety management practices.

Although employers cannot control roadway conditions, they can promote safe driving behavior by providing safety information to workers, and by setting and enforcing driver safety policies.

Unsafe driving and lack of employer enforcement of safety policies may contribute to fatal work-related crashes. Employers can take proactive steps to protect their employees and their companies as follows:

POLICIES

Assign a key member of the management team responsibility and authority to set and enforce comprehensive driver safety policy.

- Enforce mandatory seat belt use.
- Do not require workers to drive irregular hours or beyond their normal working hours.
- Do not require workers to conduct business on a cell phone while driving.
- Develop work schedules that allow employees to obey speed limits and to follow applicable hours of service regulations.

FLEET MANAGEMENT

- Adopt a structured vehicle maintenance program.
- Provide company vehicles that offer the highest possible levels of occupant protection.

SAFETY PROGRAMS

- Teach workers strategies for recognizing and managing driver fatigue and in-vehicle distractions.
- Provide training to workers operating specialized motor vehicles or equipment.
- Emphasize to workers the need to follow safe driving practices on and off the job.

DRIVER PERFORMANCE

- Ensure that workers assigned to drive on the job have a valid driver's license and one that is appropriate for the type of vehicle to be driven.
- Check driving records of prospective employees, and perform periodic rechecks after hiring.
- Maintain complete and accurate records of workers' driving performance.

WE'LL HELP DRIVE YOUR FLEET SAFETY INITIATIVES

From providing a formal Fleet Safety Policy to DOT driver documentation requirements to safety information for workers, Conner Strong & Buckelew can knowledgeably assist you with all of your fleet safety needs. Call Ken Bogdan at 732-660-5040 or Eric Voight at 856-552-4756 today to learn more about our client-focused solutions.

This Risk Insights is not intended to be exhaustive nor should any discussion or opinions be construed as legal advice. Readers should contact legal counsel or an insurance professional for appropriate advice. Source: National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.



AT A GLANCE

WORK-RELATED ROADWAY CRASHES

TYPES OF VEHICLES OCCUPIED BY VICTIMS:

- Semi-trucks (28%)
- Automobiles (24%)
- Pickup trucks (12%)

EVENT AND WORKER CHARACTERISTICS:

- 49% were collisions between vehicles
- 53% occurred between 7 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- 38% occurred on U.S. or State-designated highways
- 89% of fatally injured workers were male
- Risk of fatality increased at age 55 and older

INDUSTRIES IN WHICH VICTIMS WERE EMPLOYED:

- Transportation (33%)
- Services (14%)
- Construction (11%)

Source: National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, work-related roadway crashes, 1992 – 2001.