

SAFETY MEETING TOPIC: Motor Vehicle Safety

Many workers are at high risk of injury and death from traffic-related motor vehicle crashes. About three workers die from these crashes each day.

From 1980 to 1992, motor vehicle crashes were the leading cause of work-related deaths in U.S. workers. During this period, traffic-related motor vehicle crashes accounted for the deaths of 15,830 workers—or 20% of all fatal workplace injuries. Also during that period, 1,997 worker deaths were associated with motor vehicle crashes that were not related to traffic on a public highway. The number of traffic-related deaths was eight times the number not related to traffic.

Sex—Of the 2,523 workers fatally injured in traffic-related motor vehicle crashes, 93% were male. The injury rate for male workers was 11 times that for female workers (1.2 compared with 0.1 per 100,000 workers).

Age—Nearly 70% of the motor-vehicle-related fatalities occurred among workers aged 25 to 54. Workers aged 30 to 34 were involved in the highest number of fatalities (360), and workers aged 65 and older had the highest fatality rate—1.3 per 100,000 workers (Table 1).

Drivers, Passengers, and Pedestrians—Most fatally injured workers were drivers (76%); 14% were pedestrians, and 9% were passengers.

Restraints—Of the 2,158 fatally injured workers who were either drivers or passengers in a motor vehicle, 62% were not using any type of safety restraint. Thirteen percent used lap and shoulder belts, and nearly 5% used lap belts. Information about the type of restraint was not provided for 19% of these fatally injured workers.

If driving is part of your job, take the following steps:

- Use seat belts at all times. Let other workers ride with you only when the vehicle has a seat belt for each person.
- Always drive within the speed limit.
- Do not drive if you are fatigued.
- Be familiar with the maintenance procedures for all vehicle systems.
- Establish schedules that allow enough time to obey speed limits