

VITAL CHOICES: DRINKING, DRIVING & SEAT BELTS

This easy-to-use Leader's Guide is provided to assist in conducting a successful presentation. Featured are:

INTRODUCTION: A brief description of the program and the subject that it addresses.

PROGRAM OUTLINE: Summarizes the program content. If the program outline is discussed before the video is presented, the entire program will be more meaningful and successful.

PREPARING FOR AND CONDUCTING THE PRESENTATION: These sections will help you set up the training environment, help you relate the program to site-specific incidents, and provide program objectives for focusing your presentation.

REVIEW QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS: Questions may be copied and given to participants to document how well they understood the information that was presented. Answers to the review questions are provided separately.

INTRODUCTION

Traffic safety is a subject that many safety trainers recognize as an important area for safety training. But with the ever growing list of "required" training that must be done, traffic safety is often pushed to the bottom of the list. Now may be the time for many safety trainers to revise their lists because there isn't any single area that offers as much opportunity for improvement in employee safety and health as in the area of traffic safety.

Why Include Traffic Safety in Your Safety Program? Notwithstanding the fact that OSHA will require it in the near future there are many reasons to include traffic safety in your safety program. Look no further than the mission statement of your company's safety program and you will find all the reasons you need. A traffic safety program can save your company money, reduce lost work time, reduce Worker's Compensation claims, and reduce employee injuries and fatalities.

The Facts About Traffic Safety

Many employers still think of traffic safety as an off-job issue. They might be surprised to learn that in 1992 35.6% of all work related deaths were caused by motor vehicle crashes, making motor vehicle crashes the number one cause of work related employee deaths. (NSC Accident Facts 1993) And while motor vehicle operation may not be a routine part of most industrial or manufacturing jobs the statistics show that leaving this subject out of employee safety meetings could be costly.

There are three times as many workers killed off-the-job than while at work. And more than half of all worker's injuries occur off-the-job. Off-job accidents in 1992 cost employers 300,000,000 days of lost time. Of these off-job statistics, motor vehicle crashes were the cause of 62.8% of worker deaths and 22.9% of worker lost time injuries. (NSC Accident Facts 1993) These statistics certainly give validity to off-job safety training in general and particularly show the need for a traffic safety program for all workers regardless of whether they operate a motor vehicle at work or not.

Saving Money

In the general population motor vehicle deaths average about 42,000 per year. Injuries related to motor vehicles average about 3,200,000 per year. The costs of these injuries and deaths to our economy is staggering. In 1990 these costs were estimated by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to be over 135.7 billion dollars. (NC NETS- Network of Employers for Traffic Safety)

The costs to an employer when a worker is killed in a work related motor vehicle crash is also staggering. It is estimated that the costs of Worker's Compensation alone for each fatality is \$110,000.

And there are many other costs to an employer, even if the fatality or injury happened off-the-job. Some of these costs include: wages paid to absent employees, temporary or permanent replacement costs, training costs, lost production or overtime costs as a result of worker absence, and increased health care and insurance costs. (NC

NETS)

Remembering that 35.6% of all work related deaths and 62.8% of all off-job worker deaths are motor vehicle related, we can see that there is a huge amount of room for real savings and benefits. As we stated earlier, traffic safety is the area that offers the most opportunity for cost savings and improvements in worker safety and health.

What Should be Included?

A complete and comprehensive traffic safety program must be tailored around the specific needs of your company and your employees. But no matter what your company's specific needs, there are two areas that must be addressed in any traffic safety program. These two areas are the use of seat belts and restraint systems and driving while impaired.

Studies and statistics show that the best way to prevent serious injury and death when involved in a motor vehicle crash is by wearing a seat belt and using occupant restraint systems. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration studies show that manual lap and shoulder belts reduce the chance of serious injury or death by 45-50%. The use of airbags with the seat belt can bring this reduction to 60%. If employees are convinced to always use their seat belt and restraint systems, serious injuries and deaths related to motor vehicle crashes can be reduced by as much as 50-60%. (NSC Accident Facts 1993)

Alcohol plays a role in too many motor vehicle crashes. About 48% of all traffic fatalities in 1991 involved alcohol. In 1991 there were 19,899 alcohol related motor vehicle fatalities. This amounts to an average of one alcohol related death every 26 minutes. In 1992 the costs associated with these crashes were 32.7 billion dollars. (NSC Accident Facts 1993)

There are many areas that can be included in a traffic safety program: speeding, pedestrian safety, weather conditions, or rules of the road. However, as the statistics show, no area has the potential life saving impact as the areas of seat belts and drinking and driving. That's why these areas are a must for any traffic safety program.

Where Does This Videotape Program Fit In?

As with any safety program one of the first steps is to convince employees of its benefits. This videotape **program Vital Choices: Drinking, Driving and Seat Belts** exposes your employees to the real life

consequences of not using seat belts or choosing to drink and drive. Major Bill Ethridge, a state trooper for over 30 years, convinces the viewer through stories of real highway tragedies to always buckle up and to never drink and drive. The viewer will also hear from a victim of a drunk driver and experience first hand the emotional toll inflicted by a drunk driver.

This program can serve many purposes. It can be used as a valuable tool in your company's comprehensive traffic safety program, but works just as well as a safety reminder for any holiday season. In either case the time your employees spend watching this program is time well spent.

PROGRAM OUTLINE

Introduction

- Major Ethridge tells the viewer what it's like to tell a family that a loved one has been killed in a motor vehicle crash. He shares with the audience that in almost every case the family members want to know why their loved one was killed. Major Ethridge answers, "It's usually because someone made a bad choice. Made a bad choice to drink and drive or made a bad choice on the non-use of a safety belt."
- To emphasize this point Major Ethridge recalls a particularly tragic crash that involved a family of four going out for a Sunday picnic. The father had been drinking and no one was wearing seat belts. The car went out of control and began flipping down the road. Both children were thrown from the car and killed. Major Ethridge uses this story to emphasize the damage that can be done by choosing to use alcohol and operate a motor vehicle and by not being responsible about the use of seat belts and restraint systems.

Seat Belts

- "I'll go ahead and tell you right now, seat belts will save your life." After making this statement Major Ethridge backs it up by explaining to the audience that using seat belts and restraint systems will increase the chances of surviving a motor vehicle crash by up to 60%.
- After explaining that less than 60% of us are buckling up Major Ethridge wonders out loud, 'What is the reason more of us don't buckle up?' As if to answer his own question, Major Ethridge tells the audience about a friend who hated to wear his seat belt. This friend thought that seat belts were too uncomfortable and that he felt "closed in" while wearing them. Major Ethridge goes on to tell the viewer how his friend was killed in a head-on collision. The driver of the other car was wearing his seat belt and walked away from the crash unhurt.
- Major Ethridge finishes with seat belts by reminding the viewer that wearing seat belts is a "safety habit" and a 'Vital choice" that we must make to stay safe in motor vehicles.

Alcohol and Driving

- Major Ethridge tells the viewer that a second 'vital choice" they must make is to never drink alcohol and then drive an automobile.
- He explains how alcohol affects the brain and reaction time. He emphasizes that your brain becomes impaired from the first drink of alcohol.
- Major Ethridge tells the audience that many of us have a mistaken concept that we can drink a few drinks and then operate a motor vehicle safely. "That idea is a fallacy" says Major Ethridge.
- To emphasize his point he tells the audience a story about his newspaper carrier. "This newspaper carrier liked to drink and thought he could drive safely after drinking. 'I can handle it' was always his response when asked about his drinking and driving" Major Ethridge tells us. Major Ethridge goes on to tell about the night he had to respond to a call involving this newspaper carrier. As a result of his drinking and driving this newspaper carrier killed himself and his two young sons.
- After this story Major Ethridge introduces Carolyn Smith. Ms. Smith tells us the emotional story of how her husband was killed by a drunk driver the day after Christmas. Ms. Smith goes on to tell us how this tragedy effected her and her family. In an effort to prevent this from happening to others, she pleads with the audience not to drink and drive.

Closing

- As the program closes the viewer is challenged to make the right choices when it comes to wearing seat belts and drinking and driving. They are reminded that the right choices lead to life and happiness, while the wrong choices lead to injuries and death.
- After viewing this program your employees will be able to make the right choice!

PREPARE FOR THE SAFETY MEETING OR TRAINING SESSION

Review each section of this Leader's Guide as well as the videotape.

Here are a few suggestions for using the program.

- Present the videotape program to teach employees the important safety lessons Major Bill Ethridge delivers about drinking and driving and the use of seat belts.
- Emphasize that Major Ethridge has over 30 years experience as a highway trooper and is relating real stories in an effort to increase awareness of the importance of wearing seat belts and the dangers of drinking and driving.
- Make everyone aware of the importance the company places on safety and how traffic safety, even off-the-job, fits into the overall company safety program. (See introduction for more information on this.)
- While reviewing the program materials, think of specific incidents or situations involving motor vehicles that have occurred in your company. Prepare to lead a discussion about those incidents including what safety practices should have been followed to reduce the possibility of injury.
- Use the optional discussion questions included in this Leader's Guide to facilitate further discussions about motor vehicle safety issues.

Here are some suggestions for preparing your videotape equipment and the room or area you use:

- Check the room or area for quietness, adequate ventilation and temperature, lighting and unobstructed access.
- Check the seating arrangement and the audiovisual equipment to ensure that all participants will be able to see and hear the videotape program.
- Place or secure extension cords to prevent them from becoming a tripping hazard.

CONDUCTING THE PRESENTATION

Begin the meeting by welcoming the participants. Introduce yourself and give each person the opportunity to become acquainted if there are new people joining the training session.

Explain that the primary purpose of the program is to listen to Major Bill Ethridge talk about two major motor vehicle safety issues: drinking and driving and the use of seat belts.

After the presentation the viewer will be able to explain:

- Why they should always wear safety belts.
- Why they should never drink and drive.
- The impact motor vehicle fatalities can have on families.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you always wear a safety belt? Why?
2. Have you, or do you know someone who has been impacted by an alcohol-related motor vehicle crash?
3. What are some reasons people give for not wearing a seat belt? Compared to death, do these excuses have any merit?
4. What situations can put someone in a position to drink and then drive? How can these situations be avoided?
5. Are most motor vehicle accidents really “accidents?” Why not?
6. What are the risks of speeding? Do you ever exceed the speed limit? Why? Are the benefits of speeding worth the risk?
7. Besides wearing seat belts and not drinking and driving, what are some other ways to avoid being injured in a motor vehicle crash?
8. How would you feel if your irresponsible actions killed someone’s spouse or child? What can you do now to prevent that from ever happening?