



VITALS

A Weekly Safety Newsletter For Medical Transport Professionals

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Is Your Parking Lot Safe?

Look out the window at most Medical Transportation Providers' lots during peak business hours, and I doubt that you'll see row upon row of employee vehicles parked at 90 degree angles to the curb between two white lines. How many folks cut it close and barely have time to pull up in their vehicles and punch in before they're due on a car? As they rush to the time clock, do they confine their movements to clearly marked pedestrian paths?

It's clear that most of us don't treat our parking lots in the same manner as any other roadway or intersection. This creates a level of risk that resulted in 2,057 work-related parking lot deaths between 1993-2002, according to an article published in the *Journal of Safety Research* (Volume 39, Number 1).

Is there actually a design to your parking lot? Do you have policies and procedures that address driving, parking and walking? Is there a posted speed limit? Are there non-vehicular personal safety issues on your premises? How can you determine if an employee injury in your parking lot is work-related?

OSHA doesn't consider things that happen during a worker's commute as work-related, but it declares the commute to end once "he or she arrives at the work environment."

For a parking lot injury to be exempted from being a reportable OSHA event (see 29 CFR 1904.5 (b)(2)(vii)), the following conditions must be met:

1. The injury was caused by a motor vehicle accident. Any non-MVA injury must be considered work-related.
2. The injury must occur during the commute. If the employee is hurt on the lot traveling for work purposes, it's work-related and recordable.

An OSHA interpretation from July 24, 2008 describes two events in which employees were hurt in company lots while leaving their vehicles. Since they were outside of the commute and not an MVA, they were deemed work-related and recordable. How many of us should feel lucky that nobody has gotten hurt or killed in our parking lots? Think we should do something before we run out of luck?

