



VITALS

Medical Transport Professionals

A Weekly Safety Newsletter

Why Loss Control Is An Ongoing Process

Safety programs must be reviewed often, regardless of the type or size of operation, or the current loss experience. No company wants the tremendous financial burden caused by losses of all types, yet many still allocate few resources to safety and training or they continually reduce those investment resources. Some view safety as the last item of importance and some even scoff at safety programs or loss control in general, as being “non-revenue” producing. The facts should be convincing: our streets, roads and highways are the deadliest places we can be and we spend much of our lives there. However, these facts are not nearly convincing enough, because the numbers are still disturbingly high and the costs to companies continue to escalate.

Companies with strong safety programs have proven that “*safety is good business*,” but even those companies know they have to continue to carry out their safety programs on a daily basis (in essence creating a culture), never allowing the momentum to subside. Safe procedures must be followed ALWAYS: incentives, training, awards, rewards and awareness must be kept ALIVE. That’s not always easy and that’s why the safety program must be re-evaluated OFTEN. Some parts of the program might need to be changed or enhanced periodically, in order to keep awareness and interest to the highest possible level. In some cases, involving specialists from outside the company can help tremendously. Involving passionate individuals within the company and alternating those individuals also helps to keep the program vibrant. Programs get stale, people get bored, but left unattended, costs soar and injuries mount!

Don’t fall victim to a false sense of security if [loss ratios and accident frequency] rates are currently low. It’s been said that “the absence of accidents does not necessarily indicate the presence of safety.” Also don’t expect your safety efforts to pay off overnight. There are many reasons why it takes time, but suffice it to say that a well thought out plan, consistently carried out, will need time to produce. (Think of the arduous task of losing weight and then keeping it off!)

We’re constantly facing challenges in our efforts to reduce losses and improve bottom line profits. I read a recent article that confirmed thoughts many of us have had. It was something like this: “we build safer vehicles, then we take more chances.” The safety process DOES start by “engineering out the problems,” but the reason is NOT so that we can take more chances! Unfortunately, this happens too often.

Accident frequency and the associated costs can be drastically reduced. In fact, an initial reduction can sometimes be realized rather quickly. It’s more difficult to KEEP those numbers down consistently and to keep them trending down even further. Your efforts must be RELENTLESS. The good news is that it isn’t nearly as difficult to be relentless if you build safety processes into the operation, train EVERYONE and then follow up to ensure those procedures are being followed. This is how a safety culture evolves, which helps to keep the program alive and effective. Have someone from the outside review your program AT LEAST once a year. After all your hard work, it’s a HUGE help to have someone “look over your shoulder” and help identify any elements that might need to be added, changed and/or enhanced.

Rush Hour

Is it worth taking large risks for the small benefit of reaching your destination sooner? Rush hour doesn’t have to be. Slow down and live. When it comes to speeding and your own personal safety, the laws of physics are far more important than the laws of government. The fundamental principle to keep in mind is this: It’s not how fast you go that kills you, it’s how fast you’re going when you hit something.

The faster You Go:

- The further you travel after detecting the need to stop or slow. By then it may be too late to avoid a collision.
- The longer your stopping distance. If a car stops suddenly in front of you, if a pedestrian should step in front of you, if a deer darts out of the woods on the interstate, the faster you’re going, the less chance you have of stopping in time.
- The less time you give yourself to react to any road hazard just out of sight around the next bend.
- The more severe your injuries in a collision. A frontal impact at 35 mph, for example, is 33% more violent than a collision at 30 mph, even those you’ve only increased your speed by 16.6%. The energy released in a collision at 60 mph is 200% greater than at 40 mph, even those you’ve only increased your speed by only 50%.
- The harder it is to take evasive action, and the more likely the car will turn over if you do.
- The less likely your vehicle’s design and restraint systems will be able to protect you.
- The more likely you’ll die in any collision. Speeding is involved in one-third of all fatal accidents.

10 Tips for Driving Safely in Work Zones

1. Expect the unexpected
2. Slow down
3. Don’t tailgate
4. Keep a safe distance between you and the car ahead of you
5. Pay attention to the signs
6. Obey road crew flaggers
7. Stay alert and minimize distractions
8. Keep up wit traffic flow
9. Schedule enough time to drive safely and check radio, TV and websites for traffic information
10. Be patient and stay calm

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