

### **:: Vehicle Safety ::**

Vehicle accidents are the leading cause of work-related deaths among U.S. workers, and many of the accidents that have occurred are directly related to human error, not mechanical failure. The fact of the matter is that every 12 seconds someone is killed in a traffic accident in the United States, and many of those killed are people who drive a motor vehicle as part of their work duties. Since most people operate a motor vehicle on or off the job, it is important to remember these vehicle driver safety tips.

The number one thing you can do to prevent severe injuries and death before a collision occurs is to wear your seatbelt. Three out of five people killed in vehicle accidents would have survived their injuries had they been wearing seat belts. Seatbelts save lives! People who wear seatbelts have a greater chance of suffering nonsevere injuries during a traffic accident. In 2009, more than half (53 percent) of drivers involved in fatal crashes were unrestrained. When used, lap/shoulder safety belts reduce the risk of fatal injury to front seat passenger car occupants by 45 percent and reduce the risk of moderate-to-critical injury by 50 percent. Also remember that wearing a seatbelt is a legal requirement of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and not wearing one could result in a fine if you're stopped by a police officer.

The best way to avoid traffic accidents when operating a motor vehicle is to drive defensively. Defensive driving means not only taking responsibility for yourself and your actions when behind the wheel, but also being aware of what other drivers are doing.

It's very easy to develop bad habits, such as tailgating or speeding, but bad habits can be broken with a little effort. With the ever-increasing amount of vehicles on American highways and the utilization of more tractor-trailer trucks to carry freight, the possibility of having an auto accident increases with each passing day, unless you drive defensively, be alert and obey all applicable traffic laws. The information provided will help you to drive safely and avoid accidents.

Following all of these vehicle safety tips should enable you to safely travel the myriad of roads throughout Pennsylvania and surrounding states.

#### **Stay Safe**

- Use a seat belt at all times, whether you are the driver or a passenger.
- Be well rested before driving.
- Avoid taking medications that make you drowsy.
- Set realistic goals for the number of miles you can drive safely in one day.
- Don't drive if you are impaired by alcohol or drugs.

#### **Stay Focused**

- Driving requires your full attention! Avoid distractions, such as adjusting the radio, eating, drinking or talking on your cell phone.
- Continually search the road to be alert for situations requiring quick action.
- Stop about every two hours for a break. Get out of the vehicle to stretch, take a walk and get refreshed.

#### **Avoid Aggressive Driving**

- Keep your cool in traffic!
- Be patient and courteous to other drivers.
- Do not take other drivers' actions personally.
- Reduce your stress by planning your route ahead of time, allowing plenty of time for travel and avoiding crowded roads and busy driving times.

*(Statistics from National Safety Council Injury Facts 2011 Edition)*