



Weekly Safety Briefings

Week 35: August 19-23, 2019

Safe Driving

What if someone on your team didn't return to work on Monday because of a motor vehicle accident over the weekend? After a long week at work, you may want to go out with friends and family and enjoy yourself; however, weekends are the worst times for vehicle accidents. You are 30% more likely to be in a vehicle accident on Saturday than any other day of the week. While you may be driving safe and sober, you can't guarantee that everyone on the road is too. Impaired driving is responsible for more than 10,000 motor-vehicle deaths in the U.S. every year. While you can't control other drivers or driving conditions, you can do your part to ensure you're being as safe as possible when in control of a vehicle.

Monday – Distracted Driving

How many times have you seen another driver using their phone or messing with the radio while driving down the road? How many times do you find yourself reaching for your phone or eating a snack while behind the wheel? In 2018 alone, distracted driving caused 1.5 million vehicle accidents in the U.S. due to drivers being more focused on food, music, or their cellphone than on the road.

Distracted driving is responsible for more than 58% of teenage driver crashes; however, distracted driving is a real issue for drivers of all ages and experience levels ([TeenSafe](#)). If you're not visually, mentally, and physically focused on driving, you are not driving safely. If your hands are not on the wheel, eyes are not on the road, and mind is not on the task at hand, you are setting yourself up for a potential - and preventable - accident.

As you're driving to and from work this week, be more conscious of where your eyes, mind, and hands are while you drive. Pull over in a safe place to check emails and text messages, or they can wait until you reach your destination.

Tuesday – ATV/4-Wheeler Safety

ATVs and 4-wheelers are fun for people of all ages; however, these vehicles are not toys. They are basically small off-road cars that can go 60 mph or more! Knowing how to properly operate these vehicles specifically in dangerous off-road conditions is necessary to ensure everyone is safe while having fun. There are more than 650 deaths annually involving ATVs ([CPSC](#)).

Here are some tips to help keep you and your family safe while operating these vehicles:

- **Always wear appropriate protective gear!** This includes a helmet, gloves, goggles, and clothing that properly protect your arms and legs.
- **Only use ATVs and 4-wheelers that are right for your age.** Do not operate vehicles that are too small or large for your size.
- **Never exceed the passenger limit specified by the manufacturer.**



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Week 35: August 19-23, 2019

Safe Driving

- **Do not operate an ATV on a paved road.** More than 32% of ATV-related fatalities happen on paved roads, the highest leading cause.
- **Always supervise young riders (16 years old or younger).**
- **Never operate or ride in an ATV while under the influence.**
- **Consider signing up for local or online [safe riding courses](#) by the ATV Safety Institute to ensure you are fully prepared to operate these vehicles.**

While fun and exciting, ATVs and 4-Wheelers are not toys and should not be treated as such. Use caution when operating and stay safe!

Wednesday – Impaired Driving

Driving while under the influence of drugs or alcohol is dangerous to everyone on the road. Drunk driving accidents take more than 10,000 lives every year (about 30% of all motor vehicle fatalities) and cause billions of dollars in damage ([NHTSA](#)).

In order to properly operate a vehicle, a driver must be alert and aware at all times. Drugs like marijuana, prescription painkillers, and alcohol affect drivers by:

- **Slowing reaction time:** Alcohol slows reflexes, affecting your ability to react to the environment and make decisions quickly.
- **Impairing vision and perception:** Drugs and alcohol impair your vision making it difficult to see and judge the distance between you and your surroundings.
- **Decrease in concentration:** Drugs and alcohol affect your concentration making it difficult to focus on driving. You may also feel drowsy while operating your vehicle making it more likely for you to cause an accident.
- **Drowsiness:** Alcohol and certain drugs, like prescription painkillers and opioids, can cause a feeling of drowsiness and may even lead to unconsciousness. A study done by the AAA Foundation found that drowsy driving leads to an estimated 328,000 motor vehicle accidents each year with more than 6,000 resulting in fatalities ([NSC](#)).

If you have had anything to drink or used any drugs, it's always safer to call for a taxi or use a rideshare service than it is to drive yourself home. You may think you are perfectly capable of operating a vehicle or that it is no big deal, but if you cause an accident or death, your life, and potentially the lives of others, will be permanently affected. Make the smart choice and never drive while under the influence.

Thursday – Motorcycle Safety

Riding a motorcycle is fun and exciting but it comes with higher safety risks to the rider. Although motorcycles are only 3% of all registered vehicles, they are involved in 14% of all traffic fatalities ([NSC](#)). Operating a



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motorcycle is very different than driving a car or riding a bike. And most people driving cars and trucks don't pay attention to motorcycle traffic as much as they should.

Here are some safety tips to help keep you safe as you ride:

- **Always wear appropriate protective gear.** This includes a helmet, leather clothing, gloves, and boots.
- **Obey traffic rules just as if you were driving a car or truck.**
- **Stay out of blind spots and signal other drivers in advance.** Remember to watch out for other drivers that may not see you! This can be drivers that are turning or switching lanes.
- **Never ride while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.**
- **Ensure you have enough riding practice before heading out on highways or busy roads.**

Even if you don't drive a motorcycle, be sure to give motorcycles, mopeds and bicycles safe space on the road by pretending they are 3 times as large as actual size.

Friday – Motor Vehicle Accidents: What To Do

No matter how safe you try to be, some factors cannot be controlled, such as weather or other drivers, and vehicle accidents happen. In fact, there will be more than 6 million car accidents in the U.S. every year. How you react can make a significant difference in recovery.

Here are some tips to remember in the case of an accident:

- **Stay calm!** Make sure no one is injured. If someone is hurt, apply first aid and call 911 immediately.
- **Move vehicles out of the road if possible and turn on hazard lights.**
- **Call the police.** Even if the accident is minor and no one is injured, a police report may be crucial for insurance claims and can help establish fault.
- **Do not admit fault.** Even if you believe you caused the accident, leave that for the police to decide.
- **Exchange information with the other party.** This includes name, number, vehicle descriptions, license numbers, and insurance information.
- **Take photos of the vehicles involved.**
- **File an insurance claim if deemed necessary.** While at the scene, call your insurance company or use their app to see what is available to you. Some may provide you with free towing or even a consultant to help you through the reporting process.

When was the last time you or someone close to you got in a motor vehicle accident? What happened? Did you feel prepared when it happened? Do you feel better prepared now? Discuss within your group.