

Behind the Wheel at Work



Behind the Wheel at Work is a quarterly eNewsletter bringing you the latest news from the NIOSH Center for Motor Vehicle Safety.

Volume 2 Number 1 March 2017

Who are your drivers?

High-risk vs. others who drive for work. This issue of *Behind the Wheel at Work* highlights the Center for Motor Vehicle Safety's priority worker groups: drivers (e.g., truckers, taxi drivers) and others who drive as part of their work, such as sales representatives.

Revisit past issues. Catch up on [Volume 1 Number 5](#) of the newsletter, which includes a 2016 road safety recap.

Are there any specific high-risk or general work-related driving topics you'd like us to share more information about? Reach out by emailing kur4@cdc.gov.

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NIOSH CMVS Tweets

Any business whose employees drive during work hours should have a motor vehicle safety program in place. Here are... <https://t.co/1mWQ7nv4NO>

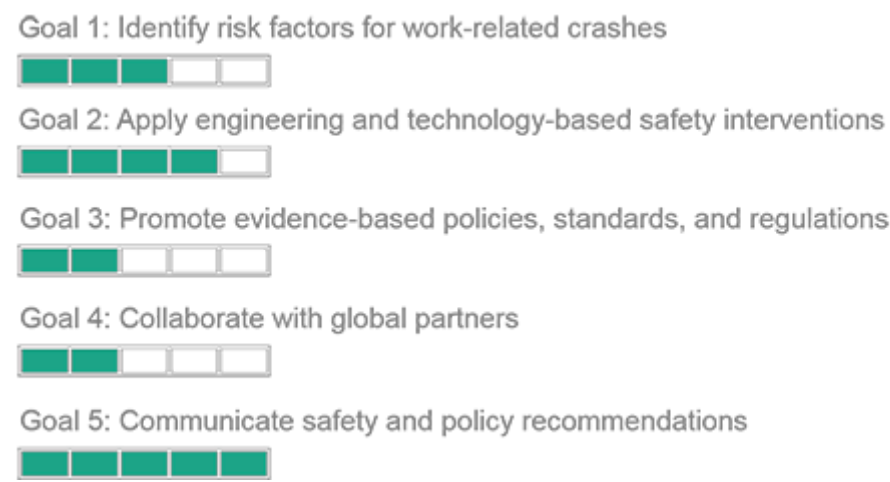
RT [@NETS_RoadSafety](#) : NETS keynote presenters announced for annual #StrengthINNumbers Fleet Safety Benchmark Conference! Register today a... <https://t.co/Y3T9MavMq9>

NEW issue of Behind the Wheel at Work | 10 Actions to Protect Drivers at Work: <https://t.co/UZ5RZq2gdn> #safety... <https://t.co/U8WBpdPZU8>

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Sharing results from the midcourse review of our 5-year strategic plan

The NIOSH Center for Motor Vehicle Safety has completed the midcourse review of progress made on our [5-year strategic plan](#), and we're ready to share the results. Here's an overview of how far we've come in achieving our 5 strategic goals:



Access [Results from 2016 Midcourse Review](#) for a full report. The Center is making substantial progress, much of it related to Goals 1, 2, and 5: risk-factor characterization, engineering and technology interventions, and communication of motor vehicle safety information to employers and other audiences. The midcourse review assessed progress by determining whether performance measures outlined in the plan were Unmet, Met, or Partially Met as of September 2016. Nearly two-thirds of the 46 measures are at least Partially Met.

What do these results mean for drivers in high-risk occupations and others who drive as part of their work? Pairing internal assessment results with stakeholder input, the Center encourages NIOSH and our external partners to develop research that:

- Leads to the safe application of emerging vehicle technologies (e.g., highly-automated vehicles) to special-use work vehicles such as police, fire, and other emergency response vehicles.
- Expands work toward prevention of fatigued and drowsy driving, particularly among the law enforcement community and oil and gas extraction industry.
- Shows how the interrelationship between off-the-job driving (e.g., “mega commutes”) and on-the-job factors (e.g., company driving and crew transportation policies) influence motor vehicle safety, both at work and while commuting.
- Evaluates policy, program, and training interventions to reduce risk factors such as fatigue, distractions, medications, and chronic health conditions.

In 2017, we plan to extend this process by improving our understanding of the Center’s target audience: employers. How? Focus groups will help us learn what topics, formats, and channels employers prefer when receiving and sharing safety information.

Safety tip for employers!

Consider having workers acknowledge that they have read and understand your distracted driving policy.

Are you ready for Distracted Driving Awareness Month in April?



[Last year](#) we provided some recommendations for how to prevent distracted driving at work during Distracted Driving Awareness Month. With the annual April observance approaching, we've revamped our [Distracted Driving at Work webpage](#) and added new resources, including a Spanish-translated version of our distracted driving GIF to use on Twitter.

Whether your workers drive for business travel, making deliveries, client visits, commutes to work sites, or other job reasons, distracted driving is a risk to other drivers as well as your own employees. In fact, **16% of all motor vehicle crashes in the U.S. involved a distracted driver in 2014**. Distractions cost lives – they also cost employers \$72,442 on average per non-fatal, on-the-job crash injury.

Cell phones are a well-known distraction associated with driving. Between texting, making calls, and using hand-held devices for other purposes such as looking up directions, distracted drivers put their own as well as others' lives at risk. Yet, [hands-free phones are not necessarily safer than hand-held devices](#).   Employers can set cell phone policies and practices that

... phone use, including text messaging, while driving. — Employers can develop phone policies and practices that

clearly communicate to workers what a company or organization does and does not allow. The National Safety Council offers a [free cell phone policy kit](#) for employers to use in the workplace.

Even if you do not actively participate in Distracted Driving Awareness Month, consider giving your workers these key messages: **Your brain has limited ability to perform two tasks at once. When driving becomes secondary, you pay less attention to possible dangers on the road. Behind the wheel, driving is your primary job.**

New global recommendations for purchasers of fleet vehicles



In the United States, vehicles are tested for safety by two new car assessment programs (NCAPs): (1) the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) assigns up to 5 stars based on a series of crash tests, and (2) the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) designates Top Safety Picks through its own program of crash tests. These crash ratings help consumers make crucial decisions about the safety of the vehicles they buy, and employers can also use NHTSA and IIHS ratings to guide their purchasing decisions.

By purchasing safer vehicles, employers can help make roads safer for their employees – and for everyone else who uses our roads. **If employers require that the vehicles they purchase be equipped with advanced vehicle safety technologies and high levels of occupant protection, manufacturers have a strong incentive to make similar features available on all the vehicles they make.** And, fleet vehicles are generally sold after a certain number of years or miles are reached, so there is potential for large numbers of newer and safer vehicles to make their way into the vehicle fleet as a whole.

The two NCAPs in the United States are part of a global organization called Global NCAP, which includes a total of nine NCAPs around the world. Recognizing the potential influence of employers’ purchasing practices on motor vehicle safety, Global NCAP recommends that employers purchase vehicles rated “5-star” by a recognized NCAP, and never less than “4-star.” Global NCAP further recommends that employers include certain core safety features on all vehicles they buy or lease for business use. To fully comply with the recommendations, the mandatory safety features – electronic stability control, seat belts, and front and side collision protection – must also meet UN or U.S. vehicle safety standards. Highly recommended features are autonomous emergency braking and vehicle designs that reduce harm to pedestrians in the event of impact. See below for the fleet purchasing recommendations as updated in 2016, and [access the 2015 document that provides background](#) on the recommendations.

Mandatory



Front and side collision protection



Seat belt and anchorages



Electronic stability control

Highly recommended



Autonomous emergency braking systems



Pedestrian protection

Focus on NIOSH CMVS Researchers Meet Jim Green



Tell us about your time at NIOSH.

After working as an engineer supporting Navy and Marine Corps helicopter programs for the Department of Defense, I began my now almost 20-year career at NIOSH. During my time as Deputy Branch Chief for the Protective Technology Branch in NIOSH’s Division of Safety Research, I supported a number of projects, including early research on EMS worker safety. As that research grew, I moved from management to the research team, eventually leading the project in 2009.

Q&A: NETS Executive Director Meet Joe McKillips



Joe became the Executive Director of the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety in September 2016. As Executive Director, he is responsible for leading NETS’ road safety efforts, including the annual STRENGTH IN NUMBERS® road safety benchmark survey, Drive Safely Work Week™ campaign, and engagement with multi-sectoral partners in the U.S. and internationally. Prior to joining NETS, Joe had a 26-year career at Abbott, where his responsibilities included process safety, loss prevention, and global road safety. Joe represented Abbott on the NETS Board of Directors from 2008 to 2016, and served as NETS Board Chair in 2014 and 2015.

What started as a NIOSH project evaluating advanced seating and occupant restraint systems for the ambulance patient compartment has grown to involve six federal agencies, national EMS associations, and more than 30 industry partners – and has produced 11 new test methods.

The new test methods, specifically tailored for an ambulance patient compartment, provide builders with the guidance and criteria they need to design and test their vehicles, seats and cots to improve occupant crash safety.

Where do you see the impact of your work?

Our team started with a single goal: enable EMS workers to do their job while properly belted in a moving ambulance. This is a significant safety concern – a 10-year review of serious ambulance crashes found that 84% of EMS workers in the patient compartment were not wearing their seat belts at the time of the crash.

For EMS workers, wearing a seat belt can be at odds with doing their jobs properly: they need the mobility to reach the patient at all times, collect needed supplies, adjust lighting and temperature, and communicate with their driver and the hospital.

We focused our early research on advanced harness-like systems similar to those used in military helicopters, which allow workers to be safely restrained but fully mobile. This initial work showed promise, and some early adopters purchased the systems for their ambulances. Realizing that there were more opportunities to improve worker and patient safety, we built a diverse team that included ambulance builders, cot and seat suppliers, and other parts of government to tackle a range of safety concerns.

Our current project – co-funded by the Department of Homeland Security – has led to new test methods for seating, the patient cot, equipment mounts, storage cabinets, and the patient compartment body. All these test methods are focused on improving structural integrity and crash survivability. Cost-sharing with industry partners allowed the team to design and test new crashworthy seats, cots, and equipment mounts and develop test methods concurrently. Many crash-tested products are now available for purchase.

What additional research or policy changes are needed to further improve the safety of workers in ambulances?

The bulk of our research is complete. Now, our focus is moving these new test methods, each published by the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE), into national consensus standards and having those standards adopted. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the Commission for the Accreditation of Ambulance Services (CAAS) reference our SAE test methods in the national ambulance standards they publish.

Although you are new to the role of NETS Executive Director, you have more than 26 years of occupational safety and health experience in the corporate world. How are you applying these insights to your new position, and what are some of your priorities going forward?

I have learned firsthand how valuable it is to tap the collective wisdom of industry colleagues and road safety partners. It is an honor to put my experience to work expanding the mission and reach of NETS. Specifically, my experience in the private sector has given me an appreciation of the challenges employers face when implementing a comprehensive road safety program. Moving forward, I want to build upon NETS' established foundation to ensure we are positioned to help all employers develop and sustain a robust road safety program.

NETS provides a unique collaborative environment where road safety professionals can share best practices and learn from each other. Our members can measure their road safety performance against industry peers through the long-standing NETS Benchmark program, which provides a great foundation for risk assessment and program development. They can also pose road safety questions to fellow members via the NETS FORUM and participate in the STRENGTH IN NUMBERS® Annual Conference.

In the near future, NETS members can expect to see new programs and tools which will help them develop and enhance their road safety programs. We are already leveraging the recently redesigned [NETS website](#)  to communicate the benefits of our products and services, and members can expect to see more of these initiatives in the future.

Based on your experience, what is one road safety policy or practice every employer should embrace – regardless of company size?

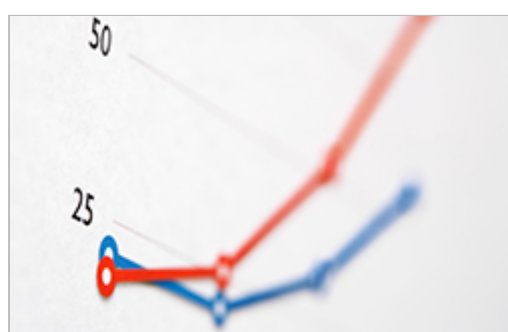
Many employers focus on developing a series of risk-reduction policies and best practices, and there is certainly value to that approach. However, my first recommendation for any organization – large or small – is to establish a dedicated leadership team of company business executives, road safety technical experts, and other key support functions such as Risk Management and HR. This structure enables the creation of programs, policies, and best practices that have broad support of internal company champions; it also increases the likelihood of successful implementation and sustainability. Establishing a cross-functional leadership team also allows members to clearly see the road safety risks facing their organization and measure the benefits of their efforts in reducing this risk.

Many NETS member companies operate motor vehicles all over the world. Could you comment on how you see NETS expanding its activities to further promote road safety for workers around the world?

Unlike automobiles, which are built according to national safety standards, the safety of ambulances is the responsibility of states. We are working closely with our partners from the National Association of State EMS Officials to educate state policy leaders. Some states now purchase ambulances that meet either the NFPA or CAAS national standard, but much work remains before we will see new and safer ambulance designs in every state and territory. This is the job ahead!

Given that many of our member companies carry a global footprint, providing road safety programs which resonate across world regions remains a great opportunity for NETS. The international road safety experience I gained during my corporate career has also given me an appreciation for the unique cultural and logistical challenges of implementing road safety for a global audience. Expanding our global focus begins with a formal survey and needs assessment in the coming year. Insights gained from NETS members and sponsors regarding their needs and proven methods for reaching global audiences with road safety messages will help shape our international strategy. We will also look to current members and sponsors with global operations to help NETS expand its reach by co-hosting international conferences and developing resources focused on global road safety needs and challenges.

How do I find and interpret motor vehicle crash data? Part 2



In our last issue, we showed you [how to find national and state statistics on motor vehicle crashes \(MVCs\) in the general population](#). Now, we'll dig deeper to find key national data on fatal work-related MVCs, using tables from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

What data does BLS collect?

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BLS maintains a national data system called the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, or CFOI, which is considered the most complete and accurate source of data on workplace fatalities in the United States, including MVCs. CFOI is a powerful tool because: (1) Data are collected by the states, which have the best access to local data sources; and (2) States use multiple sources – death certificates, OSHA reports, newspaper articles, workers' compensation – to confirm that a fatality happened at work.

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How do I access "go-to" data tables from BLS for MVC fatalities at work?

First: Go to the [BLS gateway for CFOI data tables](#). In this article, we'll use 2014 data as the example.

Next: Scroll down until you see the section shown below. Now that you know where to find the tables online, it's important you understand how to interpret them. Click on "[Example #1](#)" and "[Example #2](#)" to learn the details. We've chosen to show small portions of the tables, using occupations and industries commonly associated with driving for work as our examples:

2014 Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (revised data)

- [Cases added on the revised 2014 file](#) (4/21/2016)
- Industry by event or exposure, 2014 (PDF 243K)
- [Industry by transportation incidents and homicides, 2014](#) (PDF 227K) ([Example #1](#))
- Industry by private sector, government workers, and self-employed workers, 2014 (PDF 213K)
- Primary and secondary source of injury by major private industry division, 2014 (PDF 197K)
- Occupation by event or exposure, 2014 (PDF 156K)
- [Occupation by transportation incidents and homicides, 2014](#) (PDF 154K) ([Example #2](#))
- Worker characteristics by event or exposure, 2014 (PDF 64K)
- Event or exposure by age, 2014 (PDF 95K)
- Event or exposure by major private industry division, 2014 (PDF 100K)

Oil & gas safety coalition tackles road safety

Vehicle crashes are the oil and gas extraction industry’s leading cause of worker death. In response, transportation safety coalitions are popping up around the country. The newest group to tackle road safety was recently formed by the MonDaks Safety Network, a NIOSH partner and all-volunteer organization dedicated to improving safety in the oil and gas industry for the U.S. portion of the Williston Basin (Montana and the Dakotas).

Forming the MonDaks Transportation and Transmission Committee (MTTC), they held their first meeting in September to establish purpose and determine appropriate actions moving forward. Multiple government and industry agencies participated in the meeting, and subsequent discussions have been held with local sheriff’s departments to discuss partnership. Contact Eric Genet, president@mondakssafety.org, if you are interested in becoming part of this committee.

New GIF!



 [\[GIF - 694 KB\]](#)

NIOSH’s distracted driving GIF is now available in Spanish. [Download the GIF](#)  to use on Twitter as part of Distracted Driving Awareness Month in April!

NIOSH CMVS Contributes to Forbes

Self-driving cars are gaining attention, but most U.S. workers will still be driving themselves for decades to come. NIOSH Center for Motor Vehicle Safety Director Stephanie Pratt, PhD, shares how businesses can keep workers safe on the road in her Forbes guest post, [“Until Self-Driving Cars Go Mainstream, How Can Businesses Protect Workers From Crashes?”](#) 



Please send your comments and suggestions to us at kur4@cdc.gov.



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