

For Their Safety

International Board of Environmental Health & Safety

“Instilling Professionalism”

Oct – Nov - Dec 2018 Volume 16, Issue 4



- Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Challenges
- Older Drivers at Work
- Near Misses
- Four Things We Should Not Say
- Housekeeping Is Safekeeping at Work
- Top 12 Holiday Decorating Safety Tips

Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Challenges Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

Safety is always a shared responsibility for all drivers, riders, and pedestrians who share our streets and roads. But driving around large trucks and buses requires special consideration.

Commercial truck or bus is not like a “big car.”

- Large trucks and buses have operating limitations that make it essential for commercial drivers – and passenger vehicle drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists – to put extra focus on safety.
- Many road users don’t realize the significance of mass and size when it comes to traffic safety. A tailgating crash between two passenger vehicles may result in a fender bender. However, a similar crash between a passenger vehicle and a large truck or bus may have greater consequences.
- The significant size difference isn’t the only safety concern, however. Large blind spots, long stopping distance, and limited maneuverability affect how commercial drivers operate – and how other drivers and road users should proceed to help keep everyone safe.

Massive size difference:

- Trucks typically weigh 20 to 30 times more than passenger vehicles. In the event of a crash with a smaller vehicle, the huge mass of a truck or bus increases the likelihood of more severe damage and injuries.
- Size and weight make it more challenging to drive a large commercial vehicle, with impacts on acceleration, braking, and handling (maneuverability). For example, trucks and buses accelerate more slowly than passenger vehicles, especially going uphill. They may also gain speed more quickly going downhill. Other drivers need to recognize and respect these limitations.



Height – Safety Considerations

- A commercial vehicle's height and ground clearance pose special safety challenges.
- A taller vehicle has a higher center of gravity, which causes commercial vehicles to roll over more easily than smaller vehicles. This makes it necessary for large vehicles to slow down significantly more for curves and ramps.
- Large vehicles generate significant wind gusts that can push smaller vehicles around on the road. It's vital that passenger drivers stay alert and focused, and remember to not linger beside a large vehicle – either speed up and pass safely, or pull behind the CMV to get out of its blind spots ("no zones").
- The ground clearance difference between commercial and passenger vehicles means a smaller vehicles can be pushed or pulled under a commercial vehicle during a crash.



Older Drivers at Work NIOSH

Older Drivers in the Workplace

- By year 2020:
 - 25% of workers will be 55 years or older¹
 - 30% of Americans will be 55 years or older²
 - 40 million licensed drivers will be 65 years or older³
- Research shows that older drivers are more likely than their younger counterparts to adopt safe behaviors such as wearing a seat belt and complying with speed limits. However, those age 55 and older have twice the risk of dying in a work-related crash than younger workers do.⁴ It is normal for physical and mental abilities to decline with age – putting older workers at greater risk of serious injury if they are involved in a motor vehicle crash.
- Motor vehicle crashes account for 32% of all work-related deaths among workers age 55 or older

Preventing Crashes

- Employers
 - Consider whether the work can be done without driving. Reducing the amount of driving workers do is the most effective way to prevent motor vehicle crashes.
 - Set policies that allow drivers to consult with their supervisors to adjust driving hours if they have trouble seeing at night, and to stop driving if they are too tired or the weather is bad.
 - Provide “refresher” driving training that includes topics such as safe-driving strategies, changes in road rules, regulations on distracted driving, and new vehicle safety features.
 - Restrict driving based on assessment of actual driving ability, rather than general health status or an arbitrary age limit.
 - Give workers general information about the possible effects of prescription and over-the-counter medications on their driving.
- Employees
 - Talk with your doctor or pharmacist about potential effects of your medications on safe driving.
 - Get a thorough eye exam at least every 1-2 years, as your vision may change with age.
 - Maintain good health by engaging in regular physical activity, eating a healthy diet, getting enough sleep, and complying with all health exams and screenings.
 - Use a driving self-assessment tool to evaluate your driving.
 - Talk with your supervisor if you are having difficulty with driving, as you may need to change your driving habits.

Near Misses

A near miss is an incident that did not result in an injury, illness or property damage. Many employees shrug off near misses because it did not result in a negative outcome.

As you recall, the Heinrich Ratio illustrates what happens when near misses are left unchecked.

Near Misses are important learning opportunities:

- Treat near misses like an accident
- Encourage employees to report near misses
- Investigate the near miss
- Implement corrective action(s)

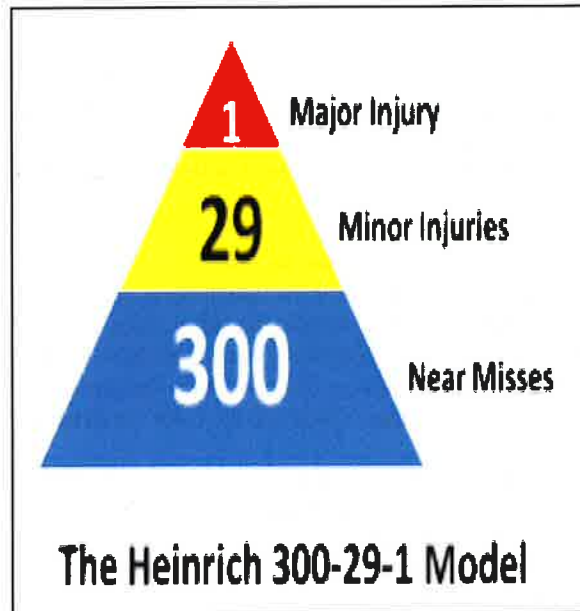
Some of the many reasons for near misses:

Unsafe Acts

- Rushing or hurrying
- Not following the safety rules
- Improper lifting
- Not using the appropriate ppe

Unsafe Conditions

- Poor housekeeping
- Poorly maintained tools
- Electrical hazards
- Hazardous atmosphere
- Temperature and humidity
- Poor illumination



Ignoring near misses is only asking for trouble, however, the biggest challenge we face in getting a near miss reporting system in place is getting the workers to report them. Most are afraid to report a near miss because they do not want to be blamed for it. Management needs to let the employees know that reporting a near miss is a means to help identify any weaknesses in the company's health and safety program and that instead of being blamed they will be thanked for bringing it to management's attention.

How Many Near Misses Occurred?

An employee walks down the hall, stepping over an extension cord stretched across his path. He turns a corner and nearly collides with another worker. To avoid the collision, he steps to the side, spilling coffee onto the floor and inadvertently jostling a shelving unit, on which a tool placed close to the edge of the top shelf falls and hits the ground.

Safety Quotes

"Safety is something that happens between your ears, not something you hold in your hands."
Jeff Cooper

"Don't play for safety - it's the most dangerous thing in the world."
Hugh Walpole

"Better a thousand times careful than once dead."
Proverb

Four Things We Shouldn't Say
by Lidia Dilley Jacobson Wednesday, 19 September 2018

Throughout my years of serving as a safety professional, I have seen safety grow from simply telling people to “follow the rules” to engaging people in building safety cultures. I’ve also seen employees and managers shift their thinking about safety as they engage in it for all the right reasons – so we can all go home tonight. It’s refreshing!

Yet when an accident does happen, as much as we work to prevent it, I’ve also heard some questions and statements that make me wonder if we have truly advanced safety. I admit, those questions and statements might have been “the way we said it” in the past, but they can no longer be accepted if we are to grow our safety culture. Here are four things I believe we should never say again – and explanations as to why we should avoid them.

1. “Why don’t they just follow the rules?”

I can give you at least 10 reasons why people don’t. In fact, we have had rules in place for many years, yet we still are having accidents. Maybe the safety rules are vague, misunderstood or lengthy, leading to shortcuts. What we need to ask is if the rule system we have in place is effective – do employees know what’s expected of them? If they don’t know our rules, how can we expect employees to follow them? One solution is to move to basic life-saving rules. These are the rules we need people to know and follow.

2. “Safety is just common sense.”

I must ask, is it? Safety is only common sense after someone explains a safety rule or procedure to you. You then take that knowledge, store it and apply it next time you encounter that situation. For example, how do people learn to never touch a downed line? Because someone told them not to. Why do our lineworkers use three points of contact when getting in and out of the cab of the truck? Because someone told them to. You get the point. Unfortunately, some people don’t heed the good advice.

3. “They must be disciplined.”

The act of disciplining employees is slowly becoming extinct, just like the dinosaurs from “Jurassic World.” Yet for some employers, the first thought after an incident is that we need to make an example of the employee who erred. The employee must pay for his mistake and we will teach him a lesson. Why? Because that is what we have always done.

However, studies are now showing that blame and punishment seldom result in a safer workplace. We must realize employees don’t come to work to intentionally have an accident. We must acknowledge that all of us make mistakes and that we sometimes drift from our safe work practices. In fact, I once heard the phrase, “You can’t fire your way to a solution.”

So, ask yourself, what is our goal? Is it to have a safer workplace? Then, instead of sending someone home, hold the person accountable and use the accident as a learning opportunity for all. Look to where and how we could have stopped the accident in the first place. When we hold people accountable and are focused on finding solutions, we make positive changes in our safe work practices and environment. We stop the accident from happening again.

Now, just to be clear, I do acknowledge there are times when discipline must be administered, but it must be done in a cautious and thoughtful manner.

4. “What were they thinking!”

This statement is the one I hear most often. We exclaim it with such astonishment, along with a tone of disgust or anger. So, consider this: What if we made the same statement but replaced the exclamation point with a question mark (“What were they thinking?”)? That question opens the door to explore and understand the actions and decisions that led to a bad outcome.

I recently heard a speaker discussing human error, and the speaker stated that often human error is not a “person” problem but instead may be a leadership problem. As leaders, we have influenced behaviors of our employees that we don’t even realize. We might tell the crews to always put safety first, and then we call out to them in the field a couple hours later and ask them why it is taking them so long to complete the job. Yes, we also are part of the problem and must acknowledge that we all play a role in an accident.

Conclusion

Have you said any of these four things before? It’s likely most of us have, but these statements damage our safety culture. So, let’s get to work and change our approach. Let’s start now. We may not always get it right. Then again, we just might.

Housekeeping Is Safekeeping at Work

Housekeeping at work is as important as it is at home, especially if you want a safe workplace. People who must function every day in a messy, disorderly work environment have lower morale, although they may not be aware of the cause. But the safety ramifications of poor housekeeping in the workplace are even more important.

Poor housekeeping may result in employee injuries or even death, citations by OSHA (or another regulatory agency), and even difficulty in securing future work. How can such a seemingly “minor” issue such as housekeeping have such serious consequences?

Poor housekeeping practices can result in:

- Injuries when employees trip, fall, strike, or are struck by out-of-place objects
- Injuries from using improper tools because the correct tool can’t be found
- Lowered production because of the time spent maneuvering over and around someone else’s mess, and time spent looking for proper tools and materials
- Lack of future work due to a reputation for poor quality

General housekeeping rules to remember:

- Housekeeping is everyone’s responsibility!
- Clean up after yourself. Pick up trash and debris and dispose of it properly. Keep your work area clean throughout the day, minimizing the time needed to clean a “larger mess” at the end of the day.
- Dispose of combustibles and flammables properly. If improperly discarded, they will increase the potential for a fire.
- Remove protruding nails and other sharp objects, or hammer them flat to prevent someone from stepping on them.
- Stack materials and supplies in an orderly manner and secure them so they won’t topple.
- Report all slips, trips, and falls, with or without injury, so the hazard can be corrected.

Do you value your health and safety, your work reputation, as well as your future employment? If you do, practice these general housekeeping rules. A well-kept workplace shows respect for those who work there. Help keep it that way!

Management Training

Here are some results of poor housekeeping practices at work:

- Time spent investigating and reporting accidents that could have been avoided.
- Fires due to improper storage and disposal of flammable or combustible materials and wastes.
- Substandard quality of finished products because of production schedule delays, damaged or defective finishes, ill-equipped employees, etc.
- “Wall-to-wall” OSHA inspections due to the “first impression” of the compliance officer.

Policies to consider:

- Institute a routine cleaning schedule.
- Hold everyone in the workplace accountable for housekeeping.
- Keep walkways free of debris and storage items.
- Train all employees on the proper disposal of combustible and flammable materials.
- Provide non-skid strips or floor mats in slippery or wet areas.
- Ensure that workers wear proper footwear for their work environment.
- Encourage employees to inform you immediately of any potential safety hazards and accidents, with or without injuries. Implement corrective measures immediately.

Top 12 Holiday Decorating Safety Tips

The holiday season is here! No matter if you celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa or all three, we're excited to share in the holiday spirit. It's easy to get caught up in the festivities, and while you're busy decorating the house, safety may be one of the last things on your mind.

According to the US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), there were 15,000 injuries related to holiday decorations in 2012. Mishaps send about 250 people to the ER daily, with falls, cuts and back strains topping the list of injuries. To ensure you have a safe, healthy, and happy holiday season with your friends and family, here are 12 tips to keep in mind as you deck out your home:

1. Keep live trees away from heat sources. Place your tree away from fireplaces and heaters, and keep a fire extinguisher near your tree. Live trees are highly flammable, due to needles and sap.
2. Hydrate your tree. A dried-out tree can catch fire faster than one that has been properly watered. Check the water level every other day to ensure proper hydration. Starting with a green tree is one way to keep it from drying out so quickly.
3. Fake it! If you buy an artificial tree, make sure it's labeled "fire resistant." Fire-resistant trees are less susceptible to catching fire.
4. Don't burn wrapping paper in the fireplace. Paper can catch fire very quickly and can cause flash fires. Instead, recycle (or better yet, reuse!) your wrapping paper.
5. Work as a team. When stringing lights and decorations above your normal reach, make sure you use a proper ladder with someone supporting the base.
6. Double-check your lights for safety. Replace any lights with frayed wires, broken sockets, and loose connections. The CPSC issued new guidelines for seasonal light safety in 2015, setting a minimum wire size, and standards for strain relief and over-current protection.
7. Power down before you turn in. Turn off all lights when you go to bed and before leaving the house to avoid a short that could start an electrical fire.
8. Prevent electrical cord damage. Don't mount lights in a way that might damage the cords, and avoid using nails or tacks. Use hooks or insulated staples instead.
9. Secure candles. Keep candles on a sturdy base to prevent tipping. Never leave a lit candle unattended.
10. Use unbreakable ornaments. If you have fragile ornament, place them out of reach from pets and kids.
11. Skip the fake food. Avoid decorations that look like candy or food if you have young children — or pets — in the house.

12. Beware of poisonous plants. While festive, poinsettias are poisonous when eaten, so keep them out of reach of kids and pets.

OSHA

Compliance Assistance Specialists

Compliance Assistance Specialists (CASs) in each OSHA area office provide general information about OSHA standards and compliance assistance resources. Small businesses, trade associations, union locals, community and faith-based groups, and others may call on CASs to speak at seminars, workshops, and other events. CASs promote OSHA's cooperative programs, training opportunities, and information and tools available on the OSHA website or from the agency. CASs are not involved in enforcement activities.

Respirable Crystalline Silica

- June 23, 2018 enforcement of the standard for general industry and maritime.
- September 23, 2017 enforcement of the standard for construction.

DOT

Driving Through Work Zones

- Expect the unexpected – normal speed limits may be reduced, traffic lanes may be restricted and people may be working on or near the road.
- Slow down – speeding is one of the major causes of work-zone crashes.
- Keep a safety distance – the most common type of accident in a work zone is rear-end collision (maintain two car lengths between you and the car in front).
- Pay attention – the warning signs are there to help you move safely through the work zone.
- Obey road crew flaggers – the flagger knows what is best for moving traffic safely in the work zone.
- Stay alert and minimize distractions – dedicate your full attention to the roadway and avoid changing radio stations or using cell phones while driving in a work zone.
- Keep up with traffic flow – motorist can help maintain traffic flow and posted speeds by merging as directed by signage.
- Check road conditions before you travel – schedule enough time to drive safely and check for traffic information.
- Be patient and stay calm – remember crews are working to improve the road and your commute.

CDC

Flu Season Again

- Spreading the flu – the flu virus is spread mainly from person to person through droplets made when people with the flu cough, sneeze or talk. Additionally, the flu spreads when people touch something with the flu virus on it, then touch their mouth, eyes or nose.
- University of Arizona scientists have found that when someone is sick in an office, it takes only four hours (!) for surfaces like coffeepot handles, copy-machine buttons and the fridge door to show traces of infectious virus.
- Everyday preventative measures include:
 - Try to avoid close contact with sick people
 - If you have flu symptoms stay home for at least 24 hours after the fever is gone.
 - If you are sick, limit contact with others
 - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you sneeze or cough – then dispose of the tissue.
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water (use a hand sanitizer if no soap and water available)
 - Avoid touching your mouth, nose and eyes.
 - Routinely clean frequently touched objects and surfaces (doorknobs, keyboards, phones, etc.)
 - If you begin to feel sick while at work – go home.

