



Local Safety Organization Focuses on Transportation and Distracted Driving During National Observance

The New Jersey Chapter of the American Society of Safety Professionals Celebrates North American Occupational Safety and Health Week

CRANFORD, NJ -- Local members of the New Jersey Chapter of the American Society of Safety Professionals (NJASSP), a state affiliate of the oldest and largest safety society, are concerned that the number one cause of on-the-job and off-the-job deaths continues to be transportation incidents – all modes. Therefore, in celebration of North American Occupational Safety and Health Week (NAOSH) which runs from May 5-11, 2019, the NJASSP along with thousands of other organizations, will be working to raise awareness of the importance of preventing on-the-job and off-the-job accidents, by distributing transportation best practices information and urging all to heed to traffic rules and regulations.

In 2017, there were 6.4 million vehicle crashes resulting in 37,133 people dying and injuring 4.57 million more. In the U.S. alone, car crashes cost all of us \$434 billion each year. Males made up approximately 70 percent of those who died in transportation accidents in 2017, 30 percent were female.

As for weather conditions, in the U.S. the majority of crashes occur during normal weather during daylight hours. The top factors causing fatal crashes are 1) failure to keep in proper lane or running off road; 2) driving too fast for conditions or in excess of posted speed limit; 3) DUI; 4) failure to yield right of way; 5) distracted and inattentive driving (texting, talking, eating, etc.); 6) operating erratic, reckless, careless, or negligent manner; and, 7) failure to obey traffic signs, signals or officer.

The State of New Jersey's experience is not unlike that of the nations. In fact, in 2017, there were over 270,000 motor vehicle crashes of which 1,495 involved the use of cell phones: 591 motor vehicle related deaths which represents 1.62 motor vehicle fatalities per day. Of particular concern were the 183 pedestrian fatalities, which represent nearly 30% of all motor vehicle fatalities, which is 17% higher than the national average of 15%. Distracted driving is a serious problem on New Jersey roads, especially the use of hand-held and hands-free cell phones. In 2017, there were 1,495 crashes involving cell phones in the state, according to the NJDOT, including 1,233 that resulted in injuries to drivers or passengers and two that caused deaths. More accidents involved hand-held devices (407) than hands-free cell phones (361).

Distracted driving is a behavior dangerous to drivers, passengers and pedestrians alike. Distractions including talking on a cell phone, texting, eating and using/looking at a GPS injured an estimated 391,000 people in motor vehicle crashes in 2017, while killing 3,450 others. For drivers 15-19 years old involved in fatal crashes in the U.S., 10 percent of the distracted drivers were distracted at the time of their fatal crash.

Founded in 1911, ASSP is made up of 37,000 occupational safety, health and environmental professionals committed to protecting people, property and the environment so we urge people to drive wisely, follow traffic laws and rules, and to devote one's full attention to the driving task at hand. The NJASSP also urge law enforcement officials to continue to crack down on those that break traffic laws and state and federal officials to continue to upgrade our roads and bridges.

Businesses can and are doing their part by reviewing their driver safety policies, most are including an element that would prohibit workers from conducting business on a cell phone while driving, mandating seat belt use and developing work schedules that allow employees to obey speed limits and to follow hours-of-service regulations.

Our driving community needs to continue to do our part to curb these preventable tragedies. The NJASSP urges you and your readers to support NAOSH Week this May 5-11, and throughout the year by urging your friends, family and co-workers to drive smart. The tangible and intangible losses due to transportation crashes are extremely high. To learn more about NAOSH Week and to see what our partners are doing, please visit our website at nj.assp.org.

Together we can make a difference.

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