



# INTERNATIONAL UNION OF ELEVATOR CONSTRUCTORS LOCAL NO. 18 • AFL-CIO

## IUEC18 JOINT SAFETY COMMITTEE MESSAGE

### VEHICLE SAFETY

Traffic collisions are the leading cause of on-the-job fatalities in America. The increasing traffic congestion on our nation's roadways wastes significant amounts of time and money, reduces productivity and promotes dangerous driving behaviors. Employees may feel pressured to drive faster, for longer periods of time and to engage in potentially distracting in-vehicle activities to meet their job expectations. Engaging in unsafe driving practices affects those who occasionally drive their personal vehicles for work purposes, as well as those who spend their workday driving a company vehicle. According to the National Safety Council, every seven seconds someone is injured in a car crash and every 15 minutes someone is killed in one. Employers absorb costs associated with these crashes whether they occur on or off the job. Workplace policies and employee education can help protect your employees and your company. To promote vehicle safety awareness and encourage safe driving habits, please review the items below.

#### **Secure Materials for Transport**

To prevent unsafe movement of materials during transport, secure all tools and equipment. In the event of a collision or while making sudden maneuvers, loose objects can slide around or become airborne, injuring the vehicle occupants. Before you leave, secure any items that could become a potential hazard. Consider having a photo inventory of your work vehicle and all equipment, should someone break into the vehicle, due to an accident, and even items that could fall out during an accident.

#### **Seat Belt Use**

Seat belts are the single most effective means of reducing deaths and serious injuries in traffic collisions. As the most effective safety device in vehicles, they save nearly 12,000 lives and prevent 325,000 serious injuries in America each year. In the event of a traffic collision, occupants not wearing seat belts could slam into the steering wheel, windshield, other parts of the interior, or even be ejected from the vehicle. Please buckle up before you leave.

#### **Distracted Driving**

Driver distractions are the leading cause of most vehicle collisions and near collisions. According to a study released by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 80% of collisions and 65% of near collisions involve some form of driver distraction. Distractions occur within 3 seconds before a vehicle crash. A few leading causes of collisions occur while using electronic devices, reaching for an object inside the vehicle, looking at something in or outside of the vehicle, and eating. With hectic schedules & roadway delays, employees may feel compelled to multi-task in keeping up with their personal and work-related responsibilities. More time on the road means less time at home or at work, but "drive time" can never mean "down time." Since drivers make more than 200 decisions during every mile traveled, it's crucial for employers to stress that when driving for work, safe driving is their primary responsibility.

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## **Alcohol and Drug Impaired Driving**

In a recent California DMV study, 67.5% of fatal/injury crashes were related to alcohol impaired drivers and 10.8% were related to drug impaired drivers. It is estimated that three out of every 10 Americans face the possibility of being directly involved in an alcohol-related traffic crash during their lifetime. Alcohol, prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, and illegal drugs can affect a person's ability to drive safely due to a decrease in alertness, concentration, coordination, and reaction time.

## **Fatigued Driving**

Drowsy driving or fatigued driving is comparable to driving under the influence of alcohol, as drivers' reaction times, awareness of hazards and ability to sustain attention become difficult. Each year, drowsy driving accounts for 328,000 crashes, 109,000 injuries and approximately 6,400 fatalities per year, according to a recent study from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. Speeding, driving under the influence and distracted driving are well-known contributors to car crashes and traffic-related fatalities, but until recently, drowsy driving has flown under the radar. Drowsy and fatigued driving is dangerous because many people are unaware of how tired they are until they are behind the wheel of a car, potentially putting themselves and others at risk.

## **Aggressive Driving**

Employees commuting to and from work and traveling for work purposes can often find themselves in traffic delays. While these situations can create a high level of frustration, the roadway is one place that being aggressive never pays. Aggressive driving behaviors include tailgating, cutting off other drivers, running red lights, weaving in and out of traffic, frequent lane changes and speeding. Avoid engaging in conflict with other drivers and obey all traffic laws.

## **Other Helpful Tips**

If driving a company vehicle, have in your possession a current driver's license, follow all company safety policy requirements and maintain a safe driving record. Wear your seat belt while operating a vehicle. Do not use your cell phone or any electronic device that will distract attention; if a device is used, it must be hands free. If you need to use a device while on the road, find a safe location and park your vehicle. Inspect your vehicles daily; this includes but is not limited to brakes, steering, tires, lights, blinkers, back up signals, windshield wipers, and the windshield glass. Schedule routine maintenance at manufacture intervals. Do not load the vehicle more than its rated capacity. Secure all loads properly. Do not drive any vehicle if it is in unsafe operating condition.

*Road safety is a state of mind, accident is an absence of mind.*  
Drive Safely.