Distracted Driving: The Silent Killer

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• The relationship of worker’s compensation to other employment laws such as the ADA, state and federal family and medical leave laws, and other state and federal laws

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Do Me a Favor

By Janet Metzger
WSC Executive Director

As many of you know, I have been with Wisconsin Safety Council (WSC) for about six months now. While it has only been a short time, we have accomplished quite a bit since I became the new Executive Director. One of my favorite things I have been able to do is hit the road and meet all of you.

Our members are the best in the country and I always enjoy meeting with your teams to find out how you are putting safety first—both at work and outside of work.

Unfortunately, I have noticed something as I drive around Wisconsin. Not everyone on the roads is putting safety first. You would not believe—or sadly maybe you would—how many people I see who are texting, posting something on social media or even watching videos while driving!

It is an unfortunate part of living in a connected world that people think it is more important to send a text or like a post than it is stay concentrated on driving at 70 miles per hour. This is dangerous and it needs to stop.

So, could you please do me a favor? Don’t be distracted while you drive. Put the cell phone away and pay attention to the road. The people in your vehicle and the ones around you will thank you.

While I mentioned texting and social media above, I also want to stress that any type of multitasking while driving is dangerous—even using Bluetooth for a call. You can read more about this on page eight from our in-house safety trainer, Chevon Cook.

Eliminating these distractions is so crucial. At your next safety meeting with employees, ask them how many have texted or talked on the phone while driving. If they are honest, I bet most of them would raise their hands. That is why we at WSC are here to help. We want you to create a culture of safety where instead of it being second nature to answer your phone while driving, it is second nature to put away distractions.

If you would like to plan a private distracted driving training course for your employees, let us know. We want Wisconsin to be the safest place to live, work and play—and that includes our roads.

To schedule a private training at your facility, contact WSC at 608-258-3400.
Everyone Deserves a Safe Workplace

By Amy Harper, PhD
Journey to Safety Excellence & Workplace Strategy Director, National Safety Council

There is no doubt about it, construction is a dangerous industry. With a total of 5,190 fatal workplace incidents in 2016, 970 of those killed were construction workers, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This is the third consecutive increase in annual workplace fatalities and the first time more than 5,000 fatalities have been recorded by the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) since 2006. One growing area of safety concern in construction and beyond is the use of temporary and contract workers. Contract worker fatalities accounted for 17 percent of all workplace fatalities in 2015, and workers were most often contracted by private construction firms, according to the BLS. Contract workers are a vulnerable population often performing higher risk jobs in worksites with little to no management supervision.

Companies using contract employees, therefore, need a comprehensive program that manages this area of risk on jobsites. The Campbell Institute, the center of excellence for environmental health and safety at the National Safety Council, conducted research into how world-class organizations approach around contractor management. The research found five crucial steps of the contractor lifecycle:

1. Prequalification
2. Pre-job task and risk assessment
3. Training and orientation
4. Job monitoring
5. Post-job evaluation

Our nationwide surveys have told us that more than 70 percent of employers have felt the impact of prescription drug use.

A contractor management program should “qualify” contractors that meet standards set by the hiring organization. A new NSC study shows that contractors subjected to prequalification have better average Total Recordable Rates (TRR), Days Away, Restricted or Transferred (DART) Rates, and Lost Workday Rates (LWR) within individual industries and all industries as a whole. Organizations using temporary or contract workers are responsible for the safety and health of those workers. In 2013, the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration launched its Temporary Worker Initiative (TWI) focused on staffing firm and host employer compliance with safety and health requirements when temporary workers are employed under this joint or dual employment arrangement.

TWI states that whoever is in the best position to ensure the safety and health of temporary workers has the obligation to do so. Below are some key measures host employers should follow to ensure temporary worker safety:

• Prior to contracting with a staffing firm:
  • Provide the staffing firm with requested safety data and information for your organization – provide information that will allow them to make a determination as to the safety of their worksite.
  • Allow the staffing firm physical access to the worksite to enable them to appropriately evaluate the safety of your worksite.

• Prior to temporary workers beginning work at your organization’s worksite:
  • Provide temporary workers job-specific training including emergency procedures, equipment, required PPE and information on specific hazards the worker may encounter (chemical exposure, noise, etc.).
  • Furnish PPE and train on its use, maintenance, etc. (if applicable).

In the event a temporary worker is injured while under supervision by the host employer, the host employer must:

• Report injuries involving loss of an eye, amputation or in-patient hospitalization to OSHA within the required timeframe.
• Record the injury on their OSHA 300 log regardless of what their contract with the staffing firm might say.
• In addition, the host employer should conduct a thorough incident investigation and implement identified corrective actions by either party.
• If possible, the host employer should make every effort to accommodate return to work assignments as it reduces their “days away from work” OSHA metric.

To keep those in the construction industry safe, companies need to foster a culture of safety that involves all workers whether full-time, temporary or contract. Contractor safety management programs help make clear the responsibilities for worker safety so they are able to return to their loved ones at the end of each and every work day.

Spring 2018 wisconsinsafetyvoice.org | National Safety Council
By Chevon Cook
Wisconsin Safety Council Safety Manager

In today’s busy world, many of us look for ways to maximize the working hours of our day. We answer emails while speaking to customers on the phone, and we hold conference calls with coworkers while we hammer out a report for our bosses. Unfortunately many of us conduct business on our cell phones while we are driving. It would be nice to think that every driver understands the risks associated with distracted driving; more often than not this is not the case.

Of course, using your cell phone isn’t the only kind of distracted driving that leads to motor vehicle crashes and collisions. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 3,263 drivers were involved in 3,196 distracted-affected car crashes that led to at least one fatality in 2015. 14 percent of drivers involved in any car crash fatalities in 2015—3,477 people—were the result of distracted drivers.

Even more alarming, 442 of the distracted-affected car crashes that led to 476 car crash fatalities involved the use of cell phones or other cell-phone-related activities. This accounts for 14 percent of the distracted-affected car crashes and 14 percent of the car crash fatalities in 2015. In each of these cases, drivers felt it was more important to talk on, listen to, or otherwise utilize their cell phone at the time of the crash, versus practicing safe driving techniques.

I first experienced the controversy around the use of cell phones while driving when I moved to Chicago in 2006 for work. One of the first items my manager addressed was to make sure I don’t use my cell phone while driving. “Chicago made it illegal” was part of his comment. Over the next few weeks, I observed coworkers gripping about the change, claiming how this has negatively impacted their productivity. Not long after I started, my manager came into the office, boasting about a new Bluetooth headset for use while driving, performing tasks, walking…basically any activity that required hand use. I had seen them used by others in the past, and it was interesting to see the popularity of the Bluetooth headset spread like wildfire in the office.

There are two sources of concern to address in this situation: multi-tasking while driving, and the theory that talking on a hands-free device while driving is safer than utilizing a handheld device.

Many people believe that multi-tasking allows them to work efficiently, and the same holds true for businesses. Take a look through job descriptions on various job search websites. Some will point-blank state that the ability to multi-task is a qualification of the position. Others may be a little more subtle, stating qualifications include “ability to prioritize work” or “ability to handle multiple tasks”. It’s no wonder that the workers of today feel that the art of multi-tasking is a much-needed skill! This belief can lead to unsafe behaviors such as cell phone use while driving.

More and more studies are showing that multi-tasking actually leads to employees making more mistakes, retaining less information, and forcing our brain to function in a different capacity. The University of Southern California’s Applied Psychology program identified some interesting characteristics of multi-tasking in their research on human behavior:

- Multi-tasking forces the left and right sides of the brain to work independently, causing a person to forget details and make more mistakes on each task being performed simultaneously.
- Multi-tasking leads to a temporary decline in a person’s IQ score
- Multi-tasking is less efficient because it takes extra time to shift mental gears each time a person switches between tasks
- Multi-tasking while doing natural tasks like walking is easy to accomplish, versus complicated tasks like texting while driving
- The concerns around the use of a hands-free device to talk on the phone while driving needs to be addressed as well. According to research conducted by the National Safety Council in 2012, there are additional risks that drivers take on when using a cell phone while driving, even with a hands-free device:
  - Drivers experience inattention blindness—or a cognitive distraction—where they “look” at objects, but don’t really “see” objects.
  - Drivers experience slower response and reaction times, due to the “shift in mental gears” process that must take place.
  - Drivers have more difficulty staying in their lane.
  - Drivers engaging in cell phone conversations bring four times the crash risk while on our roadways.

The statistics surrounding cell phone use while driving are quite alarming! Smartphones allow us to be connected at all times, which is just fine in certain situations. The use of cell phones while driving poses serious safety risks whenever a driver decides to utilize their phone for even one second.

Many states have adopted laws surrounding hand-held cell phone use and texting while driving. Zero states currently ban all cell phone use for all drivers, which would incorporate the use of hands-free devices.

Without the warnings around the use of hands-free devices being coupled with the hand-held laws in place, it’s hard to predict when we will start to see a decline in distracted-affected car crashes and fatalities in the United States.

Education and training around the hazards involved with cell phone use while driving is very crucial for all drivers, whether driving for work or personal reasons. This is one of the main reasons why the Wisconsin Safety Council promotes and provides defensive driving courses in both a public and private training format. We want to ensure that drivers are provided with the fundamental defensive driving strategies and skills needed to change risky behind-the-wheel behaviors and attitudes.

So the next time you’re driving and hear an incoming call come in on your phone, think twice about answering it. By eliminating the use of your cell phone while driving, you can reduce the risk of being involved in an accident and help keep yourself and others safe on our roadways.
Nucor Cold Finish Wisconsin
Category A1 | Oak Creek
nucor.com

Nucor Cold Finish Wisconsin is centered around its 72 teammates and operates in Oak Creek. The organization specializes in the cold drawing of square, flat, hexagon and round bars, that range from half inch bars in diameter to a 6"x6" square, eight feet in length to forty feet. These bars are then sold to manufacturers across the nation to make consumer and industrial goods. In 2007, Nucor started with an IIR rate of 12.6, but ultimately achieved “beyond zero” in 2017. Additionally, the division has worked over 482,000 hours without a Lost Work Day, going back all the way to August 2014.

Oshkosh Defense, LLC – North Plant
Category A4 | Oshkosh
oshkoshcorporation.com

The North Plant facility is the oldest facility and original location of Oshkosh Corporation. Since 1917, Oshkosh has been manufacturing heavy trucks for multiple applications. It is with pride and passion that every employee makes warfighters that will bring home our military men and women safe. Team members watch out for each other’s safety, train each other on proper techniques for the job or task and truly look for ways to prevent an injury by taking extra precautions or eliminating hazards where possible. North Plant was able to achieve zero lost time injuries for over 650 days and almost 700,000 work hours from November 2015 to September 2017.

Gusmer Enterprises, Inc.
Category A2 | Waupaca
Gusmerenterprises.com

Gusmer Enterprises is a wet laid non-wovens mill located in Waupaca. Since its founding, it has grown into an extremely diverse manufacturer producing: spill clean-up materials for hazardous and non-hazardous spills, absorbent carrier products, animal bedding, as well as a wide variety of filtration products. The top corporate motto is: “Safety is key because our employees are our greatest asset.” Since its employees are Gusmer’s greatest asset, the company places the importance of investing monies in safety equipment like LED reverse indicators on fork trucks, lift tables and fall protection systems. In 2017, it had the fewest recordable injuries on record.

LINETEC
Category A5 | Wausau
linetec.com

Linetec was founded in 1983. It is a single source for electrostatic solvent-based paint, anodize and powder paint finishes in Wausau, employing 572 associates. The company’s A1 core value is Safety. The 3-year industry average OSHA incident rate for business in the metal finishing / coating industry is 5.0. Linetec has performed below that mark since 2004. A 1.0 incident rate is considered world class in the safety industry and was achieved in 2010 and 2011. In 2017, Linetec’s EMR of 0.86 thanks to a new behavioral-based safety program, expansion of new hire orientation and over $200,000 invested in lift assist throughout the facility.

Lakehead Painting Company
Category C1 | Superior
lakeheadpainting.com

Lakehead Painting Company is a family-owned business founded in 1965. Lakehead is an industrial and commercial painting contractor that employs approximately 25 union and 5 management employees in the construction industry. The majority of Lakehead’s work is performed in the oil and gas industry with a focus on painting, abrasive blasting and fiber glassing of crude oil storage tanks. In 2017, two accomplishments of note are the decrease in Lakehead’s Experience Modification Rating (EMR) – 1.05 in 2010 to .64 currently – and zero recordable injuries for the entire year. The EMR is a very powerful tool to translate safety and health efforts into monetary value.

Bassett Mechanical
Category C2 | Kaukauna
bassettmechanical.com

Bassett Mechanical offers custom-built mechanical contracting, metal fabricating and maintenance service solutions to customers throughout the United States and the world. Employees are encouraged to continuously search for, report and follow up on any safety improvement opportunities and meet any near misses. In 2017, Bassett had 595 safety opportunities reported. Every one of these opportunities was reviewed by a committee, tracked for follow up and with an acceptable solution was enacted. The company finished the year with a 1.5 TRIR, zero lost time injuries and zero restricted work days. In addition, Bassett has surpassed 2,800,000 employee hours without a lost time injury.

NextEra Energy Point Beach Nuclear Plant
Category B1 | Two Rivers
nexteraenergy.com

Point Beach Nuclear Power Plant is a dual unit 1,200 megawatt nuclear power generating station owned and operated by NextEra Energy Resources, LLC. Point Beach has been recognized by OSHA as a Voluntary Protection Program Star worksite since 2011. Additionally, the plant is rated as a number 1 top-performing facility by the Institute of Nuclear Power Operators and is top decile in safety performance. The team’s safety motto is: GO-PACKERS! Get Only Better! Peer Actions Can Keep Everyone Really Safe! All employees are empowered to identify and correct unsafe acts, at risk behaviors and maintain a “See Something - Say Something” mentality.

Husky Energy - Superior and Rhinelander Terminals
Category D1 | Superior
huskyenergy.com

The Husky Wisconsin Terminals, located in Superior and Rhinelander distribute refined oil products from the Husky Superior Oil Refinery to customers in northern Wisconsin and eastern Minnesota. At the Superior Terminal, gasoline, diesel and bunker fuels are loaded onto truck tankers for distribution into the local market. At the Rhinelander Terminal, asphalt is loaded onto truck tankers for asphalt paving in Northeast Wisconsin and Western Michigan markets. The facilities carry out a number of different trainings which set them apart from other safety programs. The Superior and Rhinelander Terminals strive for the enhancement of safety beyond compliance which helps them to exceed industry safety standards.
Fall Protection in the Workplace

By Leslie Ptak
Compliance Assistance Specialist, U.S. Department of Labor/OSHA

The 5th annual National Safety Stand-Down week will take place May 7–11, 2018, and your company is invited to partici- pate. The goal of the Stand-Down week is to raise fall hazard awareness and prevent fall fatalities and injuries. Participation is open to all industries, not just construction, and no business is too small to partici- pate. Nearly half of the events re- corded through OSHA's Stand-Down website in past years were for events with less than 25 employees.

In 2017, eight Wisconsin em- ployees were killed in work-related falls. In that same year, employers reported 562 severe injuries to their local Wisconsin OSHA offices. One of every four of these was due to a fall. These were injuries that were bad enough that the employee had to be formally admitted to the hospital. Yes, fellow Wisconsinites, as we enjoy our months-long winter season, freeze/thaw cycles, and all those payments to firms that plow, sand and salt our parking lots and walkways, be assured that there is at least one icy spot that was missed. And that is the patch of ice most likely to result in an employee needing surgery to an arm or ankle or experiencing head trauma. A fall from a ladder ranked as the second most likely cause of a severe fall injury (one of every five cases). The other causes were a motley assortment where employ- ees fell off equipment, such as or- der pickers, scissor lifts, and trucks or vans (15%), fell down stairs (5%), over pallets (4%) or caught their feet in other objects (the rest of the cases).

Can participation in the annual safety stand-down make a differ- ence? When you consider the pain and suffering, as well as the work- ers compensation payments, lost time, business disruption, OSHA investigations, and possible disabili- ty that fall injuries present to your company, the time spent dedicated to a stand-down week can be invaluable. Start with the top two causes. Is your parking lot snow removal as effective as it could be? Do you use ladders? Do you need to use ladders? Then look to the basics. Do you have a process in place for identifying fall hazards? How are they addressed when brought to the attention of manage- ment?

The Stand-Down week is an invita- tion to employers to communicate the hazards of falls to employees. Done effectively, employees get the message that falls are preventable and that management is concerned for their welfare. It also is an op- portunity to look at what your fall hazards are and how you currently address them. Companies may participate by:
- providing a focused toolbox talk on a fall hazards topic in at your place of work
- taking time to share real-life sto- ries of fall protection successes and lessons learned
- providing longer fall hazard awareness training for your safety committee
- sending stand-down information to employees by email or in newsletter

hazards at the workplace in a week winds a prize
- visiting a “sister” worksite and conducting an inspection of their fall hazards
- sponsoring a safety poster contest

The important thing is to do something to increase fall preven- tion awareness. In fact, the largest single participant in 2015 and 2016 was the United States Air Force, reaching more than 1 million military and civilian personnel, who deal with the challenges of fall protection for mechanics that need to climb F-16 aircraft. One of the smallest was a small contractor with 12 em- ployees in a specialty trade.

This year’s stand down is timely in that the Agency’s new Walking and Working Surfaces’ standard, which is the general industry fall protection standard, has been in ef- fect for just one year. This standard revamped entirely the requirements for making walking and working sur- faces safer. (The previous version had not been revised in more than 40 years.) There are requirements for dock boards, service pits, mezz- anines, low-sloped roofs, window- washers, ladders and dozens of other topics. It includes training and inspection requirements, and an entirely new section on personal fall protection systems (1910.140). Analyze the gaps to see where your workplace stands compared to the new requirements.

OSHA has posted free resources on the Stand-Down web page.

1 OSHA’s Walking and Working Surfaces rule is Subpart D of 1910 and has been in effect for general industry workplaces since January of 2017.
2 General industry is loosely defined as industries other than construction and its standards are in 29 CFR 1910. Construction fall hazards are addressed in 29 CFR 1926 with fall protection, ladder and other standards.

Resources
- Stand-Down for Fall Protection: https://www.osha.gov/StopFallsStandDown/index.html

OSHA developed this article for informational purposes only. It does not necessarily reflect the official views of OSHA or the U.S. Department of Labor. February 2016.
Wisconsin Safety Council Executive Director Janet Metzger recognizing Worzalla Publishing of Stevens Point for one million hours without a lost-time accident.


Wisconsin Safety Council staff and conference planning committee members meeting in Madison in advance of the 76th annual Safety & Health Conference and Expo.

Chevon Cook, Safety Manager at Wisconsin Safety Council, leading a confined space train-the-trainer program for WSC members.

Wisconsin Safety Council staff and conference planning committee members meeting in advance of the 76th annual Safety & Health Conference and Expo.
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Contact WSC today to find out how you can become a member:

608.258.3400
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