



B.J. Walker, Commissioner

DHR Risk Management News

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VOLUME 3

BACK TO SCHOOL EDITION

It's back to school for students after a long, hot summer break and as always drivers need to be aware that there will be more youngsters on the road. Please be mindful of all traffic laws pertaining to school buses and pedestrians. You should also be aware that rising gas prices are sending more and more people to the streets -- on foot and aboard bikes. There are some basic rules that we should be aware of :

CYCLISTS:

- * Under state law, a bicycle is a vehicle and obeys the same laws as cars.
- * Use the street. It is illegal to bike on sidewalks in many towns and cities.
- * Ride with the flow of traffic.
- * Ride defensively and predictably. Signal when turning. Obey all signs, signals and pavement markings.
- * Be aware of pedestrians, potholes, drainage grates, train tracks and other hazards.
- * Stay away from the "door zone." Ride more than an arm's length from parked cars.

MOTORISTS:

- * Allow cyclists to "take" a travel lane when a road narrows.
- * Be patient.
- * Pass with care, giving bicyclists at least five feet, or stay behind until you can pass safely.
- * Bike lanes are marked on the roadway with a solid white line and a diamond or bike icon with directional arrow and typically are along the right-hand edge of the road. Don't drive in the bike lane unless preparing to turn right or park. Always yield to bicyclists before entering the bike lane. Never stop or park in the bike lane.
- * Be aware that your speed can create a "windblast" that can push a cyclist over.
- * Check for bikes in your side-view mirror before opening your car door.
- * Don't blow your horn at bicyclists unless they are in imminent danger.

WALKERS/RUNNERS:

- * If there's a sidewalk, pedestrians must use it and can go in either direction, with or against traffic.
- * If there's no sidewalk, use the shoulder. You can walk or run in either direction.
- * If there's no shoulder and you have to use the travel lane, you must go against the flow of traffic.
- * At an intersection with a signal, pedestrians should cross on the "walk" sign or when the light turns green.
- * Drivers are responsible for yielding to pedestrians in a crosswalk.

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In this issue:

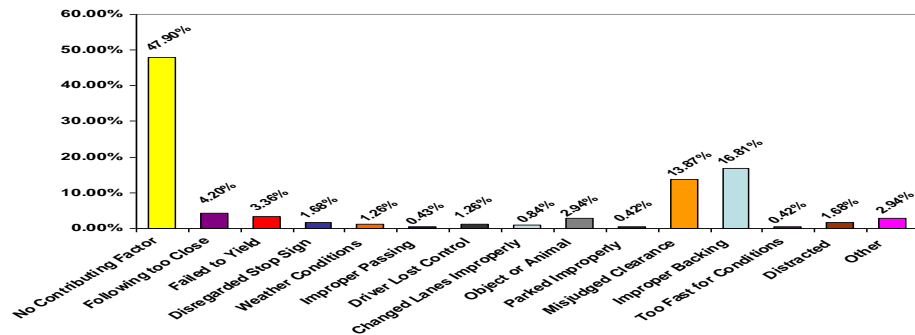
- **WIGS!!!**
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WIGS !!!

In the last edition, we introduced to some, and updated others on the DHR initiative to reduce the number of incidents that could lead to death and serious injury of our clients and consumers. This initiative is called our **“Wildly Important Goal” or “WIG”**. Our goal is to reduce the number of accidents by 50% in 2008. We didn't quite make that goal. However, did make significant strides to make this fiscal year a success. Our emphasis for FY 09, in addition to our “WIG”, will be on reducing the number of accidents involving improper backing and misjudging clearance. These accidents can be avoided by a simple change in visual habits, such as: Checking behind your vehicle before you get in, backing slowly, adjusting your mirrors to reduce blind spots, and the use of a “spotter” to give you the go ahead to make difficult backing maneuvers.

It's all about awareness, and we believe our efforts so far have made us more aware of how we can improve and achieve our goals.

Office of Facilities and Support Services Categorized Accidents by Region FY08 DHR Drivers - Contributing Factors to Accidents



Data through 6/30/2008 – Final FY08

If you would like to have your “WIG” efforts highlighted in the next issue, please contact DHR Risk Management !!!

TRAINING

ONLINE DRIVER IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM –DRIVER DO’S AND DON’TS



In the last edition we introduced the Driver Improvement Program defensive driver course for LMS and Online. The course has been online for about 6 months now and we have had overwhelming (to say the least) success! To date we have sent out approximately 2500+ certificates to those who have successfully completed the online course.

“DRIVER DO’S AND DON’TS”

In our continuing effort to offer more training in the area of safety, we are now offering another short course called “Driver Do’s and Don’ts”. It only takes about 15 minutes and offers valuable tips on driver safety. Those state employees who complete the course through the LMS version will receive course credit!

Instructions for Accessing the Driver Do’s and Don’ts E-Course in LMS.

Access the LMS:

<http://lms.dhr.state.ga.us/logon.asp>

To login to the LMS:

- ◆ In the Learner Code box, type your 8-digit Employee ID Number
(you can find this number at the top of your pay check stub or your Personnel Rep)
- ◆ In the Password box, type DHRLMS
(this needs to be typed all in uppercase; the password will appear as asterisks)
- ◆ Press the *Enter* key on the keyboard or use the mouse to click the “log on” link

You will now be in the DHR Learning Management System (LMS)

After logging in to the DHR LMS:

- Select **DHR Courses**
- Select **DHR Web Based Training** - **Page 2**
- Select the **Driver Do's and Don'ts**
- Click Enroll
- Select Proceed to "My Enrollments"
- Click the “launch” tab on the far right side of your screen.

NOTE: Two boxes will open: A small box at the top of your screen and the regular dialog box containing the training. IF you only get the one box, Open Internet Browser window, go to View, Toolbars, uncheck AOL, MSN, ADOBE, Yahoo, Google, anything not standard. Then go to Tools, Popup blocker, Turn off Popup blocker.

- Log in to LMS, go to "my Enrollments" Launch, You should then get 2 popup windows and the course should start.
- Be sure to keep the small box open until the end of the training. Close the course window first, then answer the question in the small box – “Have you completed this Training?” yes or no, Submit.

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS STICKER?



Please be aware that the citizens we serve are watching us with concern when we operate state-owned vehicles. We should all take care to be courteous and obey all traffic laws at any time, but especially when we are representing our respective state agencies.

Driver Safety Tips



Stressful Commutes Spill Over to the Job

According to a USA Today article, stressful commutes spill over to the job. The more hassled drivers feel by their morning commute, the more verbally abusive they are to co-workers and the more they try to sabotage productive efforts, suggest several studies released in 2003.



The average travel time to work in 2000 was 25.5 minutes, an increase of three minutes from a decade earlier, US Bureau of Census figures show. Gridlock also is cited as an obstacle to cities that want to attract businesses. The most aggressive people, both on the road and in the office, may be those who commute in heavy traffic and play no music or listen to relaxation tapes, the type with synthesized sounds or bird songs.

It's not distance that drives commuters bonkers; it's mostly congestion, said psychologist David Van Rooy of Florida International University in Miami.

He tested drivers' anxiety levels when they had 6-mile or 18-mile commutes in light or heavy traffic. The more congested the road and the longer heavy traffic lasted, the more depressed, anxious and frustrated people got, he found. Anxiety starts at home when drivers know they're about to get on congested roads, he found.

"We pay a price for these awful commutes," he said. Stressed drivers often are hurrying, and that's what leads to aggressive road behavior. But the hard-core aggressive driver "will tell you he's not being aggressive; everyone else is driving too slowly," added psychologist Patricia Ellison-Potter of NHTSA.

ERGONOMICS

Simple Ways to Relieve Pain and Stress in the Workplace

If you have noticed that you tend to experience pain in the back, neck, or shoulders while working, you could definitely benefit from learning a few simple ergonomic exercises. Ergonomics can be defined as the study of human mechanics for the purpose of increasing productivity levels, which basically means that it is the science of making you more comfortable! You would be amazed at the effect that ergonomic exercises can have on curing stress and discomfort.

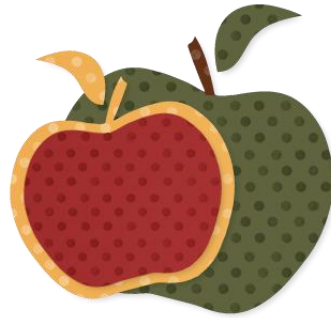
The most common places that employees experience discomfort is in their hands, wrists, shoulders, neck, and upper body. This is due to the fact that so many jobs require prolonged work days spent at desks and workstations that are not always designed with the employee's comfort in mind. By taking frequent breaks and performing these computer exercises every hour, you can break through pain and continue to work productively throughout the day.

Ergonomic Stretches During your coffee or lunch breaks, be sure to stand up and stretch your legs a bit to get your circulation going. Rotate your wrists and bend your fingers at all of the various joints. Raise your hands above your head to stretch your neck and shoulders, and also consider moving your head side to side and your shoulders up and down. Extend your arms across your body and twist side to side to stretch the upper body. To release muscle tension, consider going on a short walk outside your building. The fresh air should help to invigorate and recharge your body.

Once you are back at your desk, be sure that you continue to maintain ergonomic posture while you are working. This means that you should not sit in a rigid and uptight position, or lean forward into your screen. If you find it hard to relax while sitting at your desk, consider purchasing one of several ergonomic chairs available at local furniture stores. If your employer complains about the cost of the chair, simply bring up the high cost of worker's compensation, which should move the process right along!

If you regularly use a computer while working, be sure to practice ergonomic mousing, which means that you always keep your mouse at the same height as your keyboard and avoid letting your wrist rest on a cushion. Your forearm should be free to move the mouse in order to relieve stress on your wrist. Also try to keep the mouse right next to the keyboard to allow your forearm to rotate easily between the keyboard and mouse.

Protect Your Health The most important thing to remember when looking for ways to avoid or relieve pain throughout the work day is to schedule regular breaks away from your desk. Plan on getting up and moving around every hour or so, and also adjusting your posture frequently while seated. By following these simple ergonomic guidelines, you can ensure your health while at the work place, as well as relieve stress and tension throughout the day.



Contributions

If you have ideas or would like to contribute articles of interest to this newsletter, please contact the DHR Risk Management Office!