



## Our Driving Concern



### January 2018 Newsletter: Crashes That Result from Speeding Can Put a Dent in Your Bottom Line

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*Our Driving Concern Senior Program Manager Lisa Robinson speaks to issues and concerns all employers face when trying to make their workforce safe on the road.*

**Q:** What is 5 minutes worth to you?

**A:** On a recent trip from Dallas to Waco, I was traveling at the posted speed. I noticed all of the other traffic was passing me. So, I wondered: Does everyone think the posted speed limit is a “suggested” speed?

Do they understand the safety risks involved with speeding? Texas Department of Transportation statistics speak for themselves.

Speed was a contributing factor in 26,357 crashes statewide in 2016, resulting in 756 fatalities and more than 12,000 injuries. Let that sink in for a minute. These were friends and co-workers, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters. Many more lives were impacted because a loved one did not return home.



City governments and TxDOT officials conduct traffic and engineering studies before setting speed limits on state roads. There is an [89-page publication that outlines procedures for establishing speed limits](#). Suffice it to say much thought goes into the process.

Still, many say, “If I drive at the posted speed limit, everyone will pass me. I feel like it is safer to travel at the same speed as everyone else.”

Speed limits are posted primarily to inform motorists of the speed considered reasonable for safe travel by a majority of drivers on a given roadway. Motorists, especially those unfamiliar with a road, are expected to use this information so they can maintain control of their vehicles and come to a stop when they encounter an unexpected hazard.

Yes, a safer driving environment is established when motorists drive at the same speed; that is not a novel idea. No, you don’t find yourself in that type of driving environment often. Everyone is in a hurry. What if that changed? What if everyone traveled at the posted limit?

Have you ever had someone pass you only to end up directly in front of you at the next stop light? **Ask:** Was that leapfrogging move worth the risk? Share these aggressive driving resources at your workplace to address risky driving behaviors that can impact your bottom line:

- [Aggressive Driving vs. Road Rage](#)
- [The Cure for Multi-lane Changers](#)

In the 5 minutes you spend looking over these items with your team, you could prevent an injury or save a life. You also can reach employees by showing you care for their families, including those teen drivers covered on your company's health benefits plan. In our new pilot program, *Alive at 25*, teen drivers learn how to take control of situations by taking personal responsibility for their own actions, attitudes and driving behaviors.

For information or to set up free training, contact *Our Driving Concern* Program Coordinator and Master Trainer [Cindy Leonard](#).

## Missed Call No Reason for Meltdown at Texas-Based Frozen Food Express

There is a warmth in David Guyer's message to truck drivers at [Frozen Food Express](#).

"My team and I speak with drivers daily, both as a reactive measure to a safety event and, most importantly, proactively to remind them and engage them in always striving to be as safe as possible and always follow my first rule of truck driving: 'Always return home alive,' " he said.



Guyer is the corporate safety manager at Lancaster, TX-based FFE, and a former National Safety Council Instructor of the Year award winner. Under his leadership, FFE has tracked remarkable safety gains for four years running while operating from 12 locations across the U.S.:

- 2017: 4.83 Compliance-Safety-Accountability (CSA) points per million miles, 70% inspections without points, 2,289 total CSA points
- 2016: 5.65 CSA points per million miles, 68.4% inspections without points, 3,060 total CSA points
- 2015: 7.27 CSA points per million miles, 67.1% inspections without points, 4,002 total CSA points
- 2014: 7.43 CSA points per million miles, 60.3% inspections without points, 4,434 total CSA points

Liability payouts have decreased by 76% since 2014. And that is just the tip of the iceberg. FFE embarks on a new year with a new goal.

“Our goal is to ensure that 2018 is the safest we have had – ever,” Guyer said.

He said FFE is rolling out a workplace injury prevention initiative with a two-fold approach: top-down buy-in and clear communication to employees. He described the effort as creating a safety plan employees “want” to embrace as opposed to one they “have” to comply with because the boss said so.

In December, Guyer sent an email to employees with the subject line, Safe Driving is Smart Driving. He called attention to a handful of apps that can [help drivers avoid distraction](#).

“It’s important that employees understand the company cares not just about them as workers, but truly cares for them and their families,” he said. “Many employees replied that they had forwarded (the email) to family and friends.”

Your company’s traffic safety efforts could be featured next in our eNewsletter. Tell us your story. Email: *Our Driving Concern* Senior Program Manager [Lisa Robinson](#).

Go with the Flow, Except When It’s More Sensible to Go with Others

You’ve heard people say, “Go with the flow.” That notion, when applied to everyday life, can help relieve stress, right?

Who knows someone who heads to the bar after work ready to go with the flow? Throw that question out and see what kind of discussion it generates at your workplace. Then, move on to defining what impairment is and talk about risks involved with drunk and drugged driving.



Use one of our newest free resources to call the winning play: [Traffic Safety Huddle: Impaired Driving](#).

First, alcohol affects judgment. For some, it only takes one drink to impact decision-making. Depth perception, coordination and reaction time also can be affected – senses and skills regularly put to use when behind the wheel.

Talk about the impact of prescription drugs on drugged driving. Fact: The frequency of drivers with prescribed opioids detected in their systems at the time of a fatal crash increased from 1% in 1995 to 7.2% in 2015.

**Make Your Workplace Opioid-Free: [Download the kit.](#)**

Learn how to identify an impaired employee by attending a free four-hour training session, [Drug Impairment Training for Texas Employers](#). Develop or improve a resource guide for drug policies, programs and practices within your organization. The next training is Jan. 23 in Houston. See the [full list](#) here.

**Explain the Difference between Cell Phone Call and Talking to Passenger**

In her latest vlog, *Our Driving Concern* Senior Program Manager Lisa Robinson recounts the story of a man who spent 20 years working on a road maintenance crew. He died a crash. He was not wearing his seat belt, and he was ejected from his vehicle.



Robinson wonders: How many of his co-workers knew he did not buckle up? She goes on to explain how a passenger in a car or truck plays just as important a role as a co-pilot in an airplane. Conversation with a passenger is safer than conversation on a cell phone – even if that phone conversation involves using a hands-free device.

When talking on a cell phone, you cannot read cues from the person on the other end of the line in the same way as you can during face-to-face conversation. So, you focus more on the conversation than usual. This distracts your mind from focusing on driving.

Also, passengers can see your driving environment. They tend to adjust conversation when risks are heightened. And they can call out those risks, too.

**Watch: [Life is Better in the Company of a Good Co-Pilot.](#)**

**Make It Easy to Check: Distribute VIN Reminder Cards**

Safer cars mean safer driving for all us: 27.9% of vehicles on the road in Texas have an unrepaired, open recall. That is the [highest percentage of any state](#) in the U.S.



The 10 Texas cities where the problem is most significant:

1. Houston (31%)
2. El Paso (31%)
3. Arlington (30%)
4. Fort Worth (29%)
5. Dallas (29%)
6. Austin (29%)
7. San Antonio (28%)
8. Spring (27%)
9. Irving (27%)
10. Plano (26%)



How you can make a difference at your workplace:

- Distribute a two-sided “[VIN reminder card](#)” for drivers to fill out and carry with them; then, they easily can go to Check to Protect and check their vehicle’s recall status ([reminder cards also come in Spanish](#))
- [Copy the Check to Protect logo](#) and add a [Check to Protect](#) button to your company website

Texas Traffic Safety Awards: Apply Now, Earn Spot on Red Carpet

The time is now to roll out the red carpet.

Each year, *Our Driving Concern* presents [traffic safety awards](#) to Texas organizations that encourage positive driver behaviors among employees on and off the job. The goal is to decrease injuries and fatalities that are a result of crashes on state roads.

The workplace is a natural setting for distributing traffic safety messages and discussing driver behaviors — and it makes dollars and sense to do just that. Here is why: By developing company policies, providing education and offering incentives, employers can save lives and save money.



Any Texas employer is eligible to [submit an awards application](#). Entries are due electronically March 15, 2018. Two ways to gain ideas and bolster your application:

- [Watch videos paying tribute to past winners](#)
- Review the [2017 best-practice brochure](#) from employers who set the highest standards of achievement a year ago

## Distracted Drivers and Rail Safety Go Together Like Oil and Water

Look. Listen. Live. Those three words are shared up front by 12-year rail safety investigator Jim Ruiz of the Texas Department of Transportation in a webinar recorded by *Our Driving Concern*: [Highway Grade Crossing Safety](#).



Ruiz provides a safety refresher you can share at your workplace. He covers points such as:

- Knowing your surroundings
- Understanding posted signs
- Reporting a situation at a crossing

In 2016, there were [232 highway-rail incidents in Texas](#), according to the Federal Railroad Administration, resulting in 23 deaths and 83 injuries. More than 80% of incidents (187) occurred at public crossings.

Ruiz said distraction all too often is a contributing factor in incidents he investigates. He said attentive driving is paramount because gates, lights and bells do not always function properly. He concludes his presentation with four words of wisdom: Always expect a train.



## MOST POPULAR RESOURCES

Toilet Tabloids

Safety Coach Tailgate Talk Cards

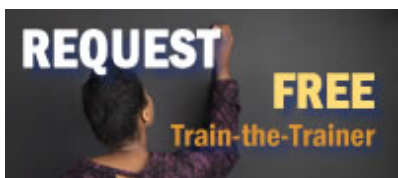
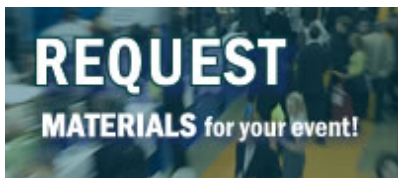
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Call the Winning Play in Your Next Safety Huddle

What Happens When Unbuckled Bodies Collide in a Crash

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## Our Driving Concern

A program of the National Safety Council in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation

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