

Study Confirms Combining Seat Belts and Air Bags Reduces Fatalities

Wearing a seat belt and driving a car with functioning air bags reduces the likelihood of death in a vehicle crash 63 percent and significantly reduces the likelihood of injury, according to a recent study lead by Justin Cummins, orthopedic surgeon at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, NH. "Using a seat belt alone nearly halved the risk of death, and air bag deployment alone reduced mortality by more than one-third," Cummins said.

Using National Trauma Data Bank statistics, researchers assess occupant restraint use in 184,992 cases of patients involved in motor vehicle crashes between 1998 and 2004. They looked for seat belt use, air bag deployment and cases in which both protection systems were used.

The study revealed key differences among demographic groups. For instance, patients older than 65 were more likely to use seat belts than patients 16 to 64 years old. They also were more likely to combine the use of seat belts and air bags.

Female patients were more likely than males to use seat belts alone or seat belts with air bags. Probably for that very reason, females also had a significantly lower risk of death and severe injury.

The study bolsters safety experts' contention that occupant protection systems save lives and comes at a time when seat belt use has been rising. According to the National Safety Council, seat belts saved an estimated 14,903 lives in 2003 among vehicle occupants older than 4, and the council estimates an additional 6,081 lives could have been saved that year if 100 percent of occupants older than 4 had buckled up.

According to the council, lap/shoulder seat belts combined with air bags provide the best available protection for vehicle occupants. Air bags have saved a total of 14,227 lives between 1987 and 2003, the council reported.

OSHA 300 Log

Between February 1st and April 30th of each year, employers must post a summary (OSHA 300A) of the total number of job-related injuries and illnesses that occurred the previous year. This is an excellent time for employers to review their 300 logs and determine where injuries and illnesses are occurring and determine a strategy to reduce, and hopefully eliminate, these safety and health hazards. Recordkeeping is a critical part of an employer's safety and health efforts for several reasons:

Keeping track of work-related injuries and illnesses can help you prevent them in the future.

Using injury and illness data helps identify problem areas. The more you know, the better you can identify and correct hazardous workplace conditions.

You can better administer company safety and health programs with accurate records.

As employee awareness about injuries, illnesses, and hazards in the workplace improves, employees are more likely to follow safe work practices and report workplace hazards.

For any questions on the OSHA 300, please contact Marty Kalbach at 609-386-6060 extension 3024 or mkalbach@njsbaig.org.

OSHA Releases New “It’s the Law” Poster

OSHA recently announced publication of its new “It’s the Law” poster. The free poster, also known as the OSHA notice of employee rights, is required to be displayed in every workplace in America. Employers are not required to replace their existing poster with the new version. The poster informs employers and employees of their rights and responsibilities for a safe and healthful workplace.

Copies are available in both *English* and *Spanish* from OSHA’S Website. Free printed copies may be obtained from any OSHA regional or area office, or by writing the OSHA Publications Office, Room N3101, 200 Constitution Avenue, N. W., Washington, D. C. 20210; phone number 202-693-1888.

Spring has Sprung!

Wednesday, March 21, 2007 marks the first day of spring this year. The spring equinox and the fall equinox are the two days in the year when the hours of daylight and darkness are exactly equal. There are 12 hours of each. From March 20 or 21 until the longest day of the year on June 21 or 22, the nights will grow shorter and shorter.

You can find a lot of fun spring activity for your students at this site on the web:

<http://www.kidsturncentral.com/holidays/spring.htm>. Check it out when you have some time to spend getting into the swing of things with some fun spring things!

Claims Corner article:

Occupational Carpal Tunnel Syndrome *Why it May Not be Related to Employment*

The studies show the carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS), affects only 2%-3% of the general population. The majority of causes are not related to the employment. Claims are thoroughly investigated to determine if this is causally related to the work environment.

Experts have shown heredity has a large role in who will be at higher risk. The size of your wrists can make you more prone to the problem. There are several metabolic diseases, such as diabetes, thyroid, lymes disease, autoimmune, rheumatoid arthritis, lupus and connective tissue disorders are at a higher risk. Being overweight or obese raises the risk, as well as, pregnant women with fluid retention. Prior dislocations and fractured bones may protrude into the carpal tunnel causing it to narrow. Surprisingly, the way your hand is positioned when you sleep, read or drive, can contribute to CTS. Despite widespread belief, using a computer, even up to seven hours a day, does not increase the risk of carpal tunnel syndrome. Since there are so many factors to consider, it should be left to the physicians and experts on whether this is related to the employment or not.

Should you have any questions, feel free to contact me on extension 3008; Connie Rogers, extension 3015 or William Miller, extension 3095.

*By Nancy Spector
NJSBAIG Claims Supervisor*

AEDs are a Life Saver

Automated external defibrillators, or AEDs, are a common sight in many businesses and public buildings. They have saved countless lives, and are easy to use. But many people still don't understand why they are necessary or what they do.

What is an AED?

You've seen full-sized defibrillators on television. When the doctor shouts "Clear" and shocks the victim, they are using a defibrillator. An AED works the same—it corrects sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) by shocking the heart back into a normal rhythm to restore a pulse.

Manufacturers have developed lighter, smaller, battery-operated, computer-controlled models which are easily portable and can be used by nearly anyone.

How do AEDs work?

AEDs are designed to be simple and easy to use by directing the operator through the necessary steps for use.

A set of pads are applied to a victim's chest and the AED determines if a shock should be administered. When the AED senses a condition that can be corrected with a shock, the unit tells the operator to deliver a shock. The AED continues to monitor the victim, and will prompt the operator through any additional steps, which may include another shock or the use of CPR.

The AED will not allow a shock to be given if it does not detect a condition that can be corrected with one. It cannot be used in an unsafe manner.

Nearly 350,000 people die each year from sudden cardiac arrest. Currently, the chances of surviving SCA without the aid of an AED are one in twenty. However, immediate use of an AED dramatically increases the chances of survival.