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## **On-the-job Traffic Deaths Show Disturbing Trend**

Employee fatalities involving roadway crashes rose by 18.7 percent in the United States between 1992 and 2000, totaling 11,952, according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

NIOSH says motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of job-related fatalities, and the risk is not limited to full-time professional drivers such as long-haul truckers. Employees operating company owned vehicles over shorter trips, and employees who must drive personal vehicles on the job are also at risk.

### **NIOSH says employers can help reduce fatalities by adopting the following measures:**

- Employees should be required to wear seat belts while driving on the job.
- Employees should be told to avoid using cell phones while behind the wheel. They should also avoid other distracting activities such as eating, drinking, or adjusting non-critical vehicle controls.
- Employers need to check that employees have valid driver's licenses.
- Fatigue management strategies should be discussed with employees during safety meetings.
- Periodic vision screening and physical examinations should be required for employees whose primary job is driving.
- Schedules should be worked out so drivers are not required to speed to meet their job demands.
- Fleet vehicles offering the highest possible level of occupant protection should be selected.
- Employee should receive training before being allowed to operate specialized vehicles.
- Employees should slow down in bad weather.
- Employees should slow down and increase following distance in construction zones.
- Defensive Driver training should be given to employees on a regular basis.

**Safety Tip:** In order to reverse this disturbing trend and to arrive safely, employees should follow all the rules of the road and drive defensively. This will increase the chances of arriving back home safe and sound.

