



SAFETY & LOSS CONTROL NEWS

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The Need for Driver Safety

By Andrew Taylor, Safety and Loss Control Director

The leading cause of work related death in America is roadway crashes. During 2005, the United States experienced an estimated (statistics are difficult to track) 46,800 deaths from motor vehicle crashes. 5,702 of those people were on the job at the time of their death. Another 2.8 million people were injured in crashes nation-wide.

Mississippi experienced 931 motor vehicle crash related deaths in the same year. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates that to be 2.21 deaths per 100 million miles traveled. Only two states (MT & SD) had a worse rate (the nation average is 1.45). If population is considered, Mississippi experienced 31.87 motor vehicle deaths per 100,000 people. The national average is only 14.66. Mississippi is a relatively hazardous state in which to operate a motor vehicle! Of the 931 deaths, only ten were job related. Another 429 people were injured on the job from vehicle crashes. Additionally, the City of Jackson was recently ranked the fourth most dangerous city in the USA for drivers, by the NHTSA.

The psychological and financial toll on victims, families, friends and co-workers is incalculatable. The toll on employers, however, is possible to quantify. According to the NHTSA, the average on-the-job crash costs an employer \$16,500. That increases to \$74,000 when an employee is injured and over \$500,000 when a fatality is involved. A worksheet that helps estimate direct and indirect costs is available.

With the number of university owned and other vehicles on the road, Mississippi's Institutions of Higher Learning have a relatively high exposure to traffic hazards. Consider the variety of drivers

and vehicles involved and hazardous nature of Mississippi traffic (drivers) and it is easy to see why a sincere effort is needed with regard to driver and fleet safety to:

- Save lives and reduce the risk of disabling injuries.
- Prevent or minimize the amount of pain, suffering and hardship that can result from a crash.
- Protect each university's human and financial resources.
- Guard against potential liabilities associated with crashes that occur while conducting university business.

During the current fiscal year we have reported forty (40) motor vehicle crashes system-wide as of this writing. As a result, fifty two (52) claimants have filed over \$90,000.00 worth of claims for property damage and bodily injury while twenty six (26) employees who were either drivers or passengers have been injured severe enough to need workers' compensation benefits.

The safe operation of university vehicles starts with well written policies that drivers are aware of and understand. A well maintained fleet and wise driver selection are also important components. When a collision does occur, various financial considerations may come into play. Tying everything together so that the university's mission can be accomplished safely and within all applicable laws can be a challenge. As an aid in identifying recommended components and outlining a comprehensive vehicle and fleet management safety program, look for a "best practices" approach to come to your campus soon.

Surviving a Hostage Situation in a Classroom Environment

By Andrew Taylor, Safety and Loss Control Director

After participating in a teleconference hosted by the University Risk and Insurance Managers' Association, presented by The Safe Travel Institute and according to information provided by The National Hostage Survival Training Center, I came away with these basic tenets:

Hostage situations can generally be described in two basic ways. One is the traditional hostage-taker, who tries to utilize hostages as leverage to negotiate something else. The other, which is becoming more prevalent, is the hostage taker bent on death and destruction to "make a statement" or with no other goal in mind. As a situation develops, a potential hostage needs to immediately assess the intruder's intent, negotiation or murder.

Hostage situations generally go through three phases. Recognizing the phases and knowing what to do in each is fundamental to surviving the situation.

1. Capture Phase: The most dangerous phase in which the intruder is trying to take control. Victims need to assess intruder's intent rapidly, avoid attention, stay low. If intent appears to be detaining people and/or controlling a facility for negotiation purposes, you will most likely move through phases two and three. If however, the intruder is actively shooting or using a weapon to kill, *immediate action* is recommended and there are two basic options for the potential victim:

Get Out – meaning to escape any way possible, through doors or windows and run until safe.

Take Out – meaning to disarm and disable the intruder as quickly as possible with as much force as needed. Consider the number of on your side versus a lone gunman (re: flight 93). Don't allow an opportunity for multiple shots and reloading by hiding or playing dead.

2. Internment Phase: Assuming we're dealing with someone intent on negotiating for what they really want, an internment period will follow. This may last a few hours or a few days or weeks. This is the time when negotiations are taking place. This is the time to do some planning for various contingencies. This is also when hostages should employ the "3 C's".

Calm – staying as calm as you can will keep the hostage taker calm. When hostages panic, hostage takers panic and the situation can escalate beyond their original intentions. Hostages can appear calm by following directions and avoiding sensitive topics in any conversation with the hostage taker.

Connect – by appearing to empathize (not sympathize) with your captor, you will become a person to them rather than a brokering chip. In some cases, by creating a bond, hostages have reversed the Stockholm Syndrome such that captors became unwilling to harm their captives. This is also when you can buy time by slowing things down. Encourage the negotiation process and keep the focus on outside contact.

Capitalize – While encouraging a negotiated release or some other peaceful conclusion, remain alert to rescue efforts and escape opportunities.

3. Resolution Phase: Research indicates that 80% of all hostages worldwide survive their ordeal one way or another. Resolutions are typically characterized by one of three options:

Negotiated Release – the safest and sometimes longest outcome requiring patience and calmness on everyone's part.

Rescue – Success depends on the rescuer's ability to distinguish between the hostages and the hostage taker. Cooperation of the hostages is critical. Avoid being misconstrued as the criminal element by avoiding threatening posture, do not grab and hold on to the weapon, make sure the rescuers can see your empty hands (sometimes the good guys

have to put their hands up, re: Columbine). If unsure what to do, stay low until instructed as to procedure.

Escape – most risky resolution. If an opportunity presents itself and the risk of not escaping is greater than escaping, take it. Recognize that you are betting with your life.

If, at any time, your hostage taker develops into a shooter (killer), then refer back to “Get Out or Take Out”.

The Correct Lockout/Tagout Procedure to Follow Prior to Servicing or Maintaining Equipment

Each machine or piece of equipment requires specific procedures for lockout and should be included in your operator’s manual. However, the following will provide you with the generally accepted sequence.

1. Notify employees when servicing or maintenance is required on a machine or equipment.
2. The authorized employee must identify the type and magnitude of the machine’s energy, understand its hazards and know how to control it.
3. Shut the machine down by normal stopping procedures (depress STOP button, open switch, close valve, etc.)
4. Deactivate the energy isolating device(s) so the machine is isolated from the energy source(s).
5. Lock out the energy isolating device(s) with assigned individual locks.
6. Stored or residual energy (such as that in capacitors, springs, rotating flywheels, hydraulic systems, and air, gas, steam or water pressure, etc.) must be dissipated or restrained by methods such as grounding, repositioning, blocking, bleeding down, etc.
7. Ensure the equipment is disconnected from the energy source(s) by first checking that no

personnel are exposed. Then verify the isolation of the equipment by operating the push buttons or other normal operating controls or by testing to make sure the equipment will not operate.

8. The machine or equipment is now locked out.

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The National Safety Council Reports...

Speeding is the most common error cited in fatal accidents, reducing reaction time and increasing vehicle stopping distance and crash impact.

Distracted driving accounts for as many as 25 percent of car crashes. Most common distractions include radio/CD tuning, cell phones, eating, personal grooming, or trying to grab out-of-reach objects.

In 2004, 3.7 million American workers suffered disabling injuries in the workplace.

The U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that contact with electric current caused 253 workplace deaths and 2,650 injuries in 2004.

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