***Information You Can Use to Prevent Accidents & Injuries***

**A Deadly Weapon?**

What weighs around 2 tons, can easily cover a distance of over 80 feet in about a second, can strike with an impact that penetrates walls, fences or other objects and is sometimes considered to be a "deadly weapon??" Nearly all of you have one--and drive one.

A vehicle, whether it is a company vehicle or personal transportation, can be a deadly machine in the hands of a careless driver. Operation of a vehicle must be taken seriously--this powerful device must be used with respect. Driving is not a "right," but a privilege. A good defensive driving attitude is the key to your safety on the road. Here are some tips that may help you be a better "defensive" driver.

* Always use your seat belt.
* Adjust all accessories. Ensure that your mirrors are adjusted as well as your seat.
* Secure loose objects in the vehicle. If you must make an evasive maneuver in order to avoid an accident, an unsecured object (e.g., tool box, brief case, etc.) may fly around in the vehicle and injure a passenger. Do not place your hard hat on the rear window shelf.
* Concentrate on your driving, rather than personal problems or your work. Be attentive to your own actions, the actions of others and the roadway environment.
* Keep a safe stopping distance behind the vehicle in front of you. You should be able to prepare to stop within 2 seconds, whatever your speed. Remember, it takes the average person about **3/4 of a second** to recognize a hazard after it is first seen and another **3/4 of a second** to switch from the accelerator to the brake pedal. At 55 mph, your vehicle covers a distance of more than 80 feet per second. You will have traveled about 120 feet before you actually began to brake.
* Be very cautious when adjusting your car radio, using your cell phone or handling any other device that will distract you from driving defensively.
* Never drink alcohol while operating a vehicle. Assign a designated driver after social functions that include alcohol use.
* Be alert to "blind spots" when changing lanes. Look all ways and always use turn signals.
* Keep a cool head. Don't drive aggressively and don't take chances. Know and obey all traffic rules, regulations, and laws.

Even if you personally obey all the driving rules, regulations, and laws, you are still at risk for a vehicle mishap, serious accident or fatality, due to someone else's carelessness. If you follow the above tips, however, your chances of "survival" on the highways will be much higher.

*Users of this tailgate talk are advised to determine the suitability of the information as it applies to local situations and work practices and its conformance with applicable laws and regulations.*