The Use of Seat Belts

Introduction:

Employees use a variety of company vehicles while on the job, including forklifts, skid steers, front-end loaders, cranes, and trucks of various size. Motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of workplace fatalities. One of the best decisions a driver can make is to wear a seat belt. Seat belt use reduces the risk of injury by 50%, and decreases the risk of death by 45% for front seat occupants of cars and 60% for occupants of light trucks. Wearing seat belts helps keep drivers and passengers safe by preventing them from being ejected during an accident. The alternative - not buckling up - can result in ejection from the vehicle in an accident, which can have deadly consequences. Because of this, it is important that all vehicle occupants use seat belts on every trip, regardless of the distance. When an employee's job requires the use of a company vehicle, seat belt safety becomes an important topic in the workplace.

Discussion Points:

- Motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of workplace fatalities
- Wearing seat belts reduces the risk of injury and saves lives
- Establish a motor vehicle safety program and company policy regarding seat belt use
- Employee training, inspection of equipment, and proper adjustment; necessary for effectiveness

Discussion:

Employers should establish motor vehicle safety programs that require the use of seat belts at all times for all employees when the job requires use of a company vehicle. A policy that defines expectations for seat belt use is important, and communicating those expectations is critical to keeping employees safe. These expectations should be emphasized in new employee orientation training and reinforced throughout the year in safety meetings. The policy should specifically state: "all employees are required to use seat belts during the course of their jobs". Emphasizing seat belt safety reduces workplace injuries, creates a positive work environment, and saves the company from potential Worker's Compensation and liability issues. It is the employee's responsibility to follow rules set in the company policy, use seat belts on every trip, and make sure passengers also buckle up. Seat belts help keep the driver and passenger in place during an accident or in the incidence of the vehicle stopping quickly. For the seat belt to be effective, it is important that seat belts and harnesses be inspected on a regular basis and are properly adjusted when worn. The vehicle manufacturer's manual is a good resource for detailed instructions on the proper adjustments necessary for the seat belts in that model. Seat belts found to be defective must be repaired before the vehicle can be used again.

Some people have excuses for not wearing a seat belt. For example, "They are uncomfortable" or "It's more dangerous to wear a seat belt than not to wear one". At the end of the day, there is no reason for not wearing a seat belt. The fact is, Seat Belts Save

Lives!

As always, stay safe out there!