



Kitsap County Traffic Safety Task Force

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Carolyn Pence, Coordinator

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Drivers putting on makeup, eating, talking on the cell phone, and reading, are just some of the many activities observed on the roadways of Kitsap County, especially during commute times. The week of October 1-5, 2007, is Drive Safely Work Week, a nationally observed campaign designed to help employers emphasize the importance of driving safely both on and off the job to reduce preventable crashes. It is a campaign sponsored by the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS).

The Kitsap County Traffic Safety Task Force supports this year's campaign, **Take Charge of YOUR Driving Behavior. Reduce YOUR Crash Risk. Avoid High Risk Driving Mistakes.** The campaign addresses five common "high-risk" driving mistakes and provides risk avoidance tips that each driver can take to ensure their safety and the safety of others sharing the road.

Avoid High-Risk Driving Mistakes

- Being Inattentive
- Following Too Closely
- Traveling at Improper Speeds
- Ignoring Traffic Signs & Signals
- Backing Up Unsafely

Because driving is something that we do every day, many of us take our driving skills for granted. Most drivers claim that they are good drivers, but it just cannot be true. With 6 million crashes that resulted in 42,642 fatalities and just fewer than 2.6 million people injured in the United States last year, everyone behind the wheel is not a good driver. Last year in Kitsap County alone, there were 22 traffic related fatalities, and as of September 21, 2007, there have been 16.

Every day thousands of drivers make the decision to multi-task, speed, tailgate, run red lights and take their aggression out on other drivers, putting themselves and other sharing the road at risk. These and other hazardous driving behaviors coupled with unsafe driver attitudes make the time employees spend in the car the most dangerous part of the work day. Eighty percent of crashes and 65 percent of near-crashes involved some form of driver inattention within three seconds before the event. The common distraction for drivers is the use of cell phones. In the State of Washington, drivers will not be able to use a hand-held cell phone effective July 1, 2008. Prior to that, effective January 1, 2008, the law will prohibit drivers from text messaging while driving.

"All of the member agencies of the Kitsap County Traffic Safety Task Force want to remind drivers to drive safe, drive sober, buckle up and slow down

"The Kitsap County Traffic Safety Task Force proudly supports this year's Drive Safely Work Week," said coordinator, Carolyn Pence. "We recognize that it is important for every driver to take a few minutes each day to hear this safety message and to **Take Charge of YOUR Driving Behavior. Reduce YOUR Crash Risk and Avoid High-Risk Driving Mistakes.**"

The mission of the Kitsap County Traffic Safety Task Force is to reduce the number and severity of traffic related deaths and injuries within Kitsap County.