

# Safety Matters

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## Safety for Commuter Drivers

Drivers need to consider multiple factors when operating their vehicles safely. This is especially true during different seasons—such as road construction season, which typically runs from June through November.

Road construction presents numerous hazards, requiring drivers, to navigate work zones cautiously. In fact, according to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), an average of 700 work zone fatalities occur each year. What's more, these incidents have increased by almost 9% in recent years. Work zones create increased hazards for drivers due to construction workers working close to moving traffic, dump trucks entering and exiting the construction area, flaggers redirecting traffic, and lanes shifting unexpectedly.

As such, employers should educate their employees, especially those who regularly drive for the State of Delaware, on maintaining work zone safety on roadways. Drivers must understand best practices for safely driving through work zones, driving defensively in work zones, and the importance of taking a proactive approach behind the wheel.

### Safe Driving Best Practices



1. Always wear a seat belt
2. Control your speed
3. Avoid distracted driving



4. Avoid impaired driving
5. Perform regular maintenance

## Driving Safely Through Work Zones

There are a few measures that employers should follow when navigating through work zones. These include:

- Pay Attention—Drivers should make sure to keep their eyes on the road at all times. In particular, it is against the law to make hand-held phone calls while driving, according to FMCSA regulations. Although drivers can use hands-free devices to make phone calls, they should never be on the phone while behind the wheel. Drivers should also take note of any signage in work zones and abide by all signage directions.
- Slow Down— Drivers should automatically slow down when entering and driving through a work zone, especially if construction workers are present. This provides more reaction time in the event of an unexpected hazard. Regardless of the traffic flow, drivers should always abide by the speed limit in construction zones.
- Move Over to Open Lanes— Upon being notified of approaching work zones, drivers should move into open lanes early in order to create a safe distance. Drivers should always check their blind spots before changing lanes to avoid accidents.
- Keep a Safe Distance— Both in and out of work zones, drivers should allow adequate distance between themselves and other vehicles to help minimize rear-end accidents, which have increased by 29% in recent years according to FMCSA.

## Promoting Defensive Driving

To prevent accidents, drivers must stay focused and monitor other motorists' driving behaviors. In doing so, drivers will be able to anticipate potential hazards or issues on the road and mitigate them before an incident happens, a practice known as defensive driving.

### June's Riddles

(answers on page two)

1. Which letter of the alphabet is the coolest?
2. What travels all around the world but stays in the corner?
3. What is gray and has a trunk?
4. Where do sharks go on vacation?
5. What animal is always at a baseball game?



# Safety Focused

## Heat-Related Illnesses

Heat and humidity can lead to various heat-related illnesses such as heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke. Knowing the signs and symptoms of each type will help keep you safe on the job. Normally, the body cools itself by allowing heat to escape through the skin and evaporating sweat (perspiration).

However, if the body does not cool down properly or does not cool down enough, a heat-related illness can occur. While anyone can be affected, the very young and elderly are at greater risk. Beyond that, heat-related illnesses can become serious or even deadly if not addressed properly.

## Types of Heat-Related Emergencies

These are three types of heat-related emergencies:

- **Heat Cramps:** Muscular pains and spasms caused by heavy exertion. This is generally the result of a loss of water and salt through sweating.
- **Heat Exhaustion:** Caused by fluid loss and decreased blood flow to your vital organs, this condition can produce flu-like symptoms.
- **Heat Stroke:** The most serious heat-related emergency, this condition occurs when the body's internal cooling system fails. This is a life-threatening condition requiring immediate and aggressive action.

However, high humidity slows down the evaporation rate of water which results in a lower rate of heat removal from the body. This causes the body to retain more heat than it would in dry air. The heat index is important to know when doing physical work outdoors, as higher combinations of heat and humidity increase the susceptibility to heat-related illnesses.

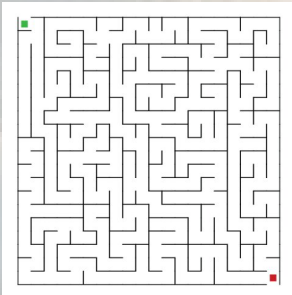
## Preventing Heat-Related Emergencies

Know the signs and symptoms of the various types of heat-related illnesses. Take time to monitor yourself and be aware of your coworkers. If working outdoors, avoid long periods of direct sunlight.

Use cooling fans to keep air circulating around your body, which helps aid your natural cooling process. Wear lightweight, light-colored, and loose-fitting clothes when working in warm and humid environments. Drink primarily non-caffeinated fluids. Caffeine actually works against you because it is a diuretic and will cause you to lose more fluids than you are ingesting. Drink water or other electrolyte products, and stay hydrated. Begin hydrating before feeling thirsty, as thirst indicates early dehydration.

## General Guidelines and Reminders

Never underestimate the seriousness of heat-related illnesses. Avoid giving medication to reduce fevers or caffeinated and alcoholic beverages. Consider other medical conditions that might be exacerbated by excessive heat. When in doubt, seek medical attention as soon as possible.



## The Heat Index

The heat index combines air temperature and relative humidity to determine an apparent temperature. The human body normally cools itself through perspiration (or sweating), when the water in sweat evaporates and carries heat away from the body.

## June's Answers

1. Ice-T
2. Postage Stamp
3. A Mouse on vacation
4. Finland
5. A Bat