

SAFETY PARTNER NEWS

March/April 2015

So You Think You're Good at Multitasking?

Paul Prospero, Director of Safety
USIC

You might be surprised to find out that using your cell phone while driving is as dangerous as drinking and driving. It doesn't sound possible, but it's true!

Studies have shown that drivers on cellphones react more slowly to stoplights, take longer to engage in evasive maneuvers, and suffer from reduced awareness of their surroundings — the same impairments caused by legal intoxication. These impairments are catastrophic in situations that require an emergency reaction to something unexpected, like a child darting into the street in front of your vehicle.

You're probably already familiar with the dangers of talking on a cellphone while driving. Most people have witnessed distracted drivers running a stop sign or mindlessly veering into another lane.

Some states ban the use of handheld phones while driving. These laws are based on the assumption that the main danger posed by talking while driving is taking your hand off the wheel to use your cell phone. While this assumption may seem responsible, the research clearly does not support them. The main problem isn't with our hands or eyes, it's with our brains!

Consider the following conclusions based on studies involving people talking on cell phones while driving:

- Having an accident is four times more likely when using a cell phone while driving.
- People react more slowly to brake lights and stop signs when they are using their cell phones while driving.
- Drivers talking on cell phones are more likely to be involved in rear-end collisions.

You may believe that you can pay full attention to traffic and road conditions while you're having a cell phone conversation. But unless you are super-human, the reality is that your attention is spread too thinly when you are trying to multitask.

Seasonal Safety Tips: Driving in Rain

- 1 Turn on your headlights.
- 2 Avoid driving near the edge of the road.
- 3 Pull over if windshield wipers can't sufficiently keep windshield clear.
- 4 Slow down and increase stopping distance.
- 5 Avoid driving through water of unknown depth.
- 6 Check your tires for adequate tread.
- 7 Do not engage cruise control.



Safety Spotlight

More than 80 of Ameren's contractors met at the Contractor Safety Forum on March 24 to discuss safety culture and initiatives. The Forum brings together Ameren and contractor leadership to share ideas and approaches to steering a company toward excellence in safety performance.

In addition to safety culture and performance, the agenda included a group activity — The Marshmallow Challenge — designed to build teamwork and increase communication, which challenged leaders to build the tallest freestanding structure for a marshmallow using spaghetti, string, and tape (pictured left).

Spring Cleaning Safely

Rich Alexander
Rainbow Treecare

With the arrival of spring, you've probably heard people talking about how they need to get their spring cleaning done. While spring cleaning is important to do each year, many people overlook important safety precautions as part of their spring cleaning regimen. Below is a list of the top spring cleaning precautions you should review with your co-workers and family.

Workplace Precautions

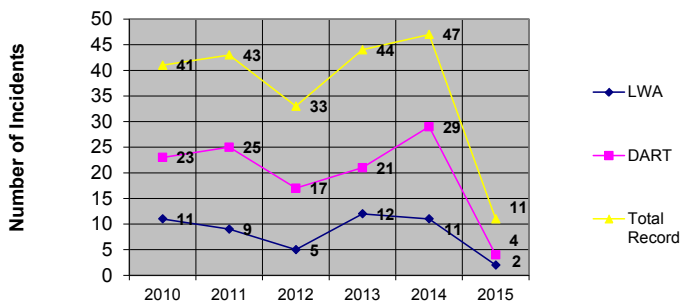
- Review fire drill and evacuation procedures. A best practice is to collaborate with your local fire department to do a mock fire drill or evacuation. It is also extremely important to have site coordinators or muster site coordinators trained to ensure that everyone exits the building quickly and safely.
- Review the severe weather plan. Ensure everyone knows when and where to seek shelter should severe weather arise.
- Review and update your Hazard Communications Plan including Safety Data Sheets (SDS).
- Review and update your First Aid, bloodborne pathogens, and CPR kits to ensure all items are well-stocked. This is also a great time to provide training and re-certification on basic First Aid and CPR.
- Review all equipment and make sure it is ready for the change in weather (Aerial lifts, vehicles, etc.).

- Work with your local fire department and provide fire extinguisher training.

Home Precautions

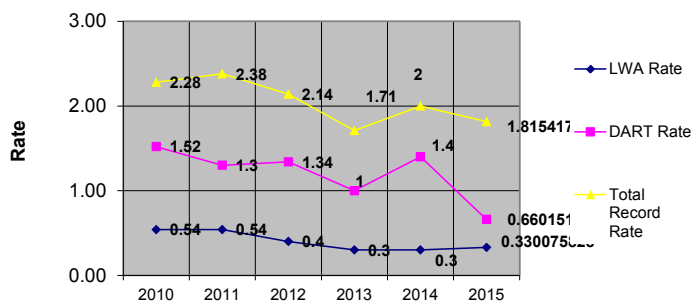
- Change the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Review your family's escape plan and complete a mock drill. If you don't have an escape plan, now is a great time to develop one.
- Develop a plan for where your family will meet should something serious happen to your home. A good example would be a neighbor's house or local business.
- Create a phone tree in the event of an emergency. This will ensure everyone knows who to call and check in with in the event of an emergency.
- Review and properly dispose of expired medications. Typically, you can find information at your local recycling center or city website for proper disposal.

Ameren Contractor Injury Trend



Contractor Safety Stats Through March 2015

Ameren Contractor Injury Rate Trend



Good Catch!

A crew working in Potosi, MO was given the task of replacing a reject 35' pole with a new 40' pole. The crew arrived on the jobsite and, upon conducting a pre-job walk through of the site, noticed an unsecured pole to the east of their worksite.

Upon noticing the unstable pole, the crew changed the scope of their work to include anchoring the unstable pole and installing a down guy prior to replacing the 35' pole as part of their original job assignment. Due to their keen observation and initiative, the crew was able to complete not only their original job task safely, but also mitigated a perceived hazard without a safety incident.

Good Catch!

Safety is something that happens between your ears, not something you hold in your hands.

~Jeff Cooper

We are interested in hearing what topics you would like to see in the newsletter. We would also appreciate any comments/feedback you have about the newsletter. Please contact us by email or our website.