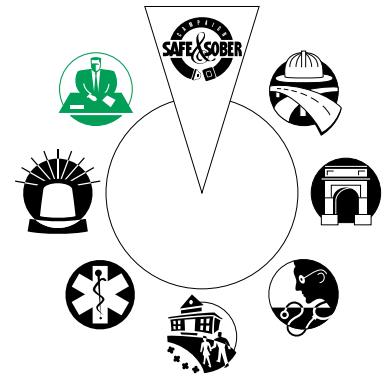


Motor vehicle crashes are the primary cause of death and injury in the United States, costing employers more than \$50 billion annually in medical care, legal expenses, property damage, and lost productivity. They drive up the cost of health benefits such as Worker's Compensation, Social Security, and private health and disability insurance.



In addition, motor vehicles increase the company overhead involved in administering these programs. Recent statistics show that when a worker has an on-the-job highway crash that results in injury, the cost to that person's employer is more than \$24,000. An off-the-job crash that results in injury costs the employer more than \$18,500.

Comprehensive traffic safety programs are designed to reduce and prevent these costs. Instituting a program in the workplace contributes to the bottom line profits of the employer, but also has far reaching impact well beyond the workplace. An effective program and habits instilled at work transfer to employees at home, to their families, and to the communities in which they live.

Once you have established a highway safety program in your place of business, expanding the program beyond the company door is the next step. The most effective way to do this is by obtaining the support of your local community. Community

support is vital for gathering insight, information, and feedback. You want to seek the support of partners who have contacts in the community that could help spread your program.

Following are some steps to follow for obtaining and working with local community partners.

1. Determine your needs, the needs of your program, and who or what organizations will best fit them. Potential partners for your campaign are all those individuals and organization representatives who have a stake or interest in reducing motor vehicle injuries. This list includes those who are traditionally involved (e.g., public safety officials, police, fire services, Emergency Medical Services, Community Traffic Safety Programs, Safe Communities, local government officials, public health professionals, chairs of influential community groups), as well as those who are indirectly involved (e.g., schools, businesses, unions, professional associations, community groups, health care providers, media).

Refer to the list at the end of this article for sources of potential partners in your community.

2. Research the person or group you are trying to recruit so you can relate to their interest and goals when you contact them.
3. Draft a letter to a potential partner. This letter may be to invite them to an organizational meeting or you may want to discuss their participation with them on a one-to-one basis.
4. When you meet with a potential partner, be prepared to explain your program, what the person and his or her organization can do to support your efforts, why they have a stake in supporting the program, and what benefits they will see by getting involved. Some reasons for involvement would be the emotional and economic costs to the community caused by traffic crashes and pro bono and media opportunities.

Employers Partnering with the Community: An Effective Force in Addressing Motor Vehicle Crashes

5. Contact many organizations. You may not have success with all of them, but the amount of involvement has no limit as long as you establish a structure within your program.

Enlisting the support of your community has many benefits that ultimately can help ensure the success of your program. Some of your community partners may have influence with local officials and members of your town, city, or state government.

Community members united together have a powerful influence on an elected official. Use your community members' skills, talents, and links to various resources. For example, if one member activity utilizes the Internet, they can help you use this resource to spread your message and alert the Internet audience to upcoming events.

Meetings, discussions, and various materials shared among your community supporters will educate employees on techniques and other skills that may benefit the individuals and the organizations in the long run.

Using your community partners to recruit additional supporters can be a very effective technique because people may be more willing to join a cause when they are invited by their friends or coworkers.

Many of your community partners may have already been involved in a similar program or campaign and can bring a contrasting viewpoint, fresh ideas, or the benefit of lessons learned in previous activities.

Partners who are community leaders stand a good chance of having a letter to the editor or guest opinion column published. This letter or column offers a citizen viewpoint of the issue and can point out some of the benefits of the program as well.

Be sure to keep partners involved and enthusiastic. Whenever possible, recognize their work. This recognition can be in the form of thank you letters; offering credit in newsletters, articles, and meetings; or offering other encouragement, for example an award system for an outstanding employee (internal) or community sponsor contribution.

Starting a highway safety program is one of the simplest and most cost-effective ways to reduce injuries and related costs. Making the effort to promote traffic safety has a public relations benefit as well. It demonstrates to employees that you are concerned with their welfare and demonstrates to the community that you are a good corporate citizen.

Where Employers Can Go For More Help

For more information on traffic safety programs in the workplace, contact the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS) or the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS)

1900 L Street, N.W.
Suite 705
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 253-6005
<http://www.trafficsafety.org>

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

400 7th Street, S.W.
NTS-22
Washington, DC 20590
Phone: (202) 366-8933
<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov>

Potential Community Partners

State Government

Governors
State Highway Safety Office
State Regulatory Commission
Department of Transportation
Department of Health
Department of Education
Motor Vehicle Division
Department of Public Safety
State Police
Legislators

Local Government

City Council
Traffic court judges
Traffic engineering departments
Police departments
County sheriffs

Educational Institutions

Administrators
Department heads
School bus supervisors
School bus drivers
University faculty
Local school boards
District School Boards
Parent-Teacher Association

Business, Industry, or Professional Organizations

Chambers of commerce
Insurance companies
Oil companies
Local leading industries
Banking institutions
Automotive dealers
Transportation companies
Health professionals
Mass transit
Emergency room physicians
association
State and local safety councils
Women highway safety leaders
association
Youth highway safety leaders
association
Citizens for Highway Safety
Association of Chiefs of Police
National Sheriffs' Association
State Driver Education Association
American Automobile Association
(AAA)
Highway Users Federation
State and local highway safety
groups
American Marketing Association
(AMA)
Community Traffic Safety Program
Safe Communities

Men's or Women's Clubs and Service Organizations

Jaycees
Rotary
Lions
Kiwanis
National Exchange Clubs
Pilot Club International
Altrusa
Zonta International
National Council of Catholic
Women
Optometric Association and
Auxiliary
American Legion posts
Veterans of Foreign Wars Posts
Mothers Against Drunk Driving
Students Against Driving Drunk
National Extension Homemakers
Council
Neighborhood associations
Sororities and fraternities

School and Parent - Teacher Groups

Public schools
Independent and parochial schools
Community service coordinators
within schools

Youth Groups

Boy Scouts
Girl Scouts
4-H
Future Homemakers
of America/HERO
Future Farmers of America
Boys clubs
Student councils
Students Against Driving Drunk

Recreational Organizations

YMCA
YWCA
Community centers
Health clubs

Religious Organizations

Churches and synagogues
Clergy associations
Men's or women's groups

Media

Newspapers
Newsletters
Magazines
Radio
Television
State high school newspaper
association
High school and college journalism
classes

Advertising/PR

Advertising agencies
Public relations agencies
Marketing agencies
Advertising clubs
Market research firms
Advertising specialty companies
Promotions companies



U.S. Department of Transportation