OSHA PLANNING TO RELEASE NEW DIRECTIVES AND SAFETY GUIDANCE

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OSHA plans to release a number of new directives and a new safety guidance for nail guns.

OSHA has noted that about 10% of apprentice carpenters suffer nail gun injuries, 37,000 people annually visit emergency rooms for nail gun accidents, and OSHA believes that many construction nail gun accidents go untreated by doctors. The nail gun guidance is in its final stages, and was developed by OSHA and NIOSH. The nail gun safety guidance addresses two types of nail guns commonly used in the building trades – guns with “contact triggers” and “sequential triggers.”

OSHA also plans to issue a number of new directives, directly affecting the construction industry. OSHA noted that an enforcement directive for the construction cranes and derricks standards should come out this fall. The directive will set out how field inspectors should interpret the standard. OSHA also anticipates releasing several letters of interpretation addressing crane standard issues. Among the issues raised by the community are: training requirements for crane operators, riggers, and signalmen; whether a crane is considered engaged in construction when it is used to deliver supplies to a building site; and the amount of time electrical utilities have to shut down power to electric lines close to construction cranes.

In addition, OSHA is also preparing directives for highway work zones, personal protective equipment, and excavation and trenching. Finally, OSHA is adding a chapter to its Field Operations Manual covering construction. This manual provides detailed guidance for construction workplace inspections.

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NOTE: This general summary of the law should not be used to solve individual problems since slight changes in the fact situation may require a material variance in the applicable legal advice.
Driving Defensively

The school buses will soon be back on the roads and Labor Day is right around the corner—where did the summer go? This is a great time to re-acquaint ourselves with some important defensive driving tips.

More than 41,000 people lose their lives in motor vehicle crashes each year and over 2.4 million more suffer disabling injuries, according to the National Safety Council. The quadruple threat of distractions, high speeds, impaired or careless driving and not using occupant restraints threatens every driver—regardless of how careful or how skilled.

Driving defensively means not only taking responsibility for yourself and your actions but also keeping an eye on "the other guy." The National Safety Council suggests the following guidelines to help reduce your risks on the road.

- Don’t start the engine without securing each passenger in the car, including children and pets. Safety belts save thousands of lives each year! Lock all doors.
- Remember that driving too fast or too slow can increase the likelihood of collisions.
- Don’t kid yourself. If you plan to drink, designate a driver who won’t drink. Alcohol is a factor in over 40 percent of all fatal motor vehicle crashes.
- Don’t use cell phones (including hands free) or any other mobile electronic devices while operating a motor vehicle. This includes, but is not limited to, answering or making phone calls, engaging in phone conversations, reading or responding to e-mails and text messages, adjusting a Global Positioning System (GPS) and accessing the internet.
- Be alert! If you notice that a car is straddling the center line, weaving, making wide turns, stopping abruptly or responding slowly to traffic signals, the driver may be impaired.
- Avoid an impaired driver by turning right at the nearest corner or exiting at the nearest exit. If it appears that an oncoming car is crossing into your lane, pull over to the roadside, sound the horn and flash your lights.
- Notify the police immediately after seeing a motorist who is driving suspiciously.
- Follow the rules of the road. Don’t contest the "right of way" or try to race another car during a merge. Be respectful of other motorists.
- Don’t follow too closely. Always use a "three-second following distance" or a "three-second plus following distance."
- While driving, be cautious, aware and responsible.

Information and recommendations are compiled from sources believed to be reliable. The National Safety Council makes no guarantee as to and assumes no responsibility for the correctness, sufficiency or completeness of such information or recommendations. Other or additional safety measures may be required under particular circumstances.