



## ASK THE LIBRARY ARCHIVE

### Safety on the Road

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**How do I know what the construction work zone laws are in my state? Also, do you have any general safety tips when traveling through work zones?**

The [Governor's Highway Safety Association](#) provides state-by-state traffic laws for construction zones so you know what to expect in your area. And, the [American Driver & Traffic Education Association](#) (ADTSEA) offers drivers' safety guidelines when navigating through construction areas. For information in addition to that provided in the links above, please forward your fax number to [library@nsc.org](mailto:library@nsc.org) or call us at 630-775-2199.

**What are the restrictions, if any, of riding in the cargo area of a pickup truck?**

The [Insurance Institute for Highway Safety](#) has a chart that shows the laws for each state. According to the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), children riding in the cargo area are particularly at high risk for injury and fatalities. For additional information, please contact the Library at 630-775-2199 or [library@nsc.org](mailto:library@nsc.org) providing your fax number.

**There are signs posted at gas station pumps telling me to not use my cell phone when fueling my vehicle. Can talking on my cell phone start a fire? What are the hazards?**

According to the [Petroleum Equipment Institute](#) cell phones have not caused a fire while refueling, but the PEI does advise against using any electronic device that might distract the motorist during the fueling process. The [Federal Communications Commission](#) also refutes rumors of actual fires but gives a word of caution. For a more technical perspective, the [Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers \(IEEE\)](#) association cites studies conducted.

**Can I still drive safely if I'm taking medications?**

According to the [Food & Drug Administration](#) most medications don't affect driving ability, but some prescription and over-the-counter medicines **can** cause reactions that might make it unsafe to drive, especially if medications are combined. The [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) offers guidance for older drivers on the possible impact of medications and driving. They provide links to transportation alternatives and to finding out about medication interactions. For more on this topic, please contact the NSC Library at 630-775-2199 or [library@nsc.org](mailto:library@nsc.org)

**I know that trucks have blind spots, but what should I beware of when driving on the highway?**

Trucks have large blind spots on both sides and often cannot see you. The [Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration](#) offers "share the road" information and "no zone" awareness when driving near trucks or large buses on the road. [Road Safe America](#) also offers tips.

**We often need to haul cargo. How do we safely protect against shifting and falling materials?**

The [Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration](#) provides cargo securement rules as well as a [handbook](#) for drivers. For additional information please contact the Library with your fax number or email address to [library@nsc.org](mailto:library@nsc.org) or by phoning 630-775-2199.

**During the fall season, deer and other wildlife often cross our paths. What should I keep in mind while driving in an area of active wildlife?**

The [Highway Safety Research Center](#) and the [Insurance Information Institute](#) have some tips on avoiding crashes with deer.

**Melting snow and springtime rain can result in flooded roadways. What should I know to minimize my risk while driving?**

An [NSC fact sheet](#) discusses the types of floods that occur in different parts of the country and offers links to additional information.

**With warmer weather approaching more motorcyclists are taking to the road. What should we know in order to prevent traffic accidents?**

The [Motorcycle Safety Foundation](#) has information on courses and other tips for motorcyclists. The [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) has tips on sharing the road with motorcycles.

**More and more of my co-workers are bicycling to work. Do you have tips for being a safe cyclist?**

The [NSC](#) has a fact sheet on safe cycling. The [League of American Bicyclists](#) offers a primer for safe bike commuting covering topics such as sharing the road, selecting equipment and bicycle maintenance. The [Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute](#) has information on selecting the right helmet and wearing it properly.

**Winter is upon us. What tips can I use to better prepare for driving during this season?**

If your car is not ready for driving in the winter you could have a real problem on your hands. Winter driving tips can be found at the [NSC](#) website as well as the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#).

**Does changing to and from daylight saving time have any effect on traffic crashes?**

Interestingly, the results of studies are mixed. Some have found little difference in crashes despite concerns about drivers losing an hour of sleep in spring or driving in the dark in fall. Other studies estimate that lives could be saved by using daylight saving time year-round. For copies of selected studies, please contact the Library at [library@nsc.org](mailto:library@nsc.org) or 630-775-2199 with your fax number.