MIFACE Case #02M160: 69-year old male semi-truck driver was killed while driving a tractor-trailer with a double tank on an interstate highway. Near an exit ramp, the tractor-trailer drove off of the roadway to the right and tried to re-enter. The vehicle's right side tires entered the gravel shoulder; the vehicle began to rotate in a counter clockwise direction and struck a guardrail.

From 2001-2004, 42 work-related fatal transportation incidents occurred in Michigan. Of these 42 deaths, ten (10) individuals (24%) who died were 60 years of age or older. Older drivers are more susceptible to injury, particularly chest injuries. To reduce the risk, implement the guidelines below:

IN ORDER TO PREVENT SIMILAR INCIDENTS IN THE FUTURE

Employers should:
- Assign a key member of the management team responsibility and authority to set and enforce comprehensive driver safety policy.
- Teach drivers how to recognize and manage fatigue and in-vehicle distractions.
- Restrict driving based on assessment of actual driving ability – not solely on general health status or an arbitrary age limit.

Employees should:
- Wear a seat belt.
- Leave plenty of time to reach destination.
- Ensure they are well rested. Take regular rest breaks.
- Do Not use a cell phone when driving.
- Plan the route, especially if traveling in an unfamiliar area.
- Use Caution at intersections and interchanges, especially when making left hand turns.
- Participate in “refresher” driver training.

DID YOU KNOW?
- Roadway crashes are the leading cause of occupational fatalities for older workers in the U.S.
- Older drivers are more likely than other drivers to have a crash at an intersection (particularly when turning left) and when merging or changing lanes on a freeway.
- Drivers ages 65 and older have higher crash death rates per mile driven than all but teen drivers and are more likely to die.
- 16% of drivers ages 60-69 who were involved in fatal crashes had a blood alcohol level at or above 0.08%.
- About 10% of individuals have medical conditions that may lead to unsafe driving behaviors.

MIFACE: www.oem.msu.edu
NIOSH: www.cdc.gov/niosh/. Older Drivers in the Workplace. Publication 2005-159
National Center for Injury Prevention & Control www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/older.htm
Insurance Institute for Highway Safety: www.highwaysafety.org

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