

# Safety and Health News

## Work zone driving tips

- Know the work zone signs. They are the orange signs that inform and warn you, but there are other devices and other indicators that tell you about the work underway, mark the path you should follow and help you navigate the work zone. Look for direction from cones, barrels, pavement markings and other devices designed to get you safely through the work zone.
- Pay attention to other drivers. It is never a good idea to ignore other drivers no matter where you're driving, but in work zones you need to be especially mindful of them. Roadway work zones are less forgiving than normal stretches of highways and streets. They often have narrower lanes and no shoulders to escape to in case you want to take evasive action.
- Stay focused. Avoid distractions. Losing focus on your driving is bad in any situation, but it can prove deadly in roadway work zones. Observing what the signs tell you, controlling your speed, steering carefully and keeping an eye on other drivers—all demand your full attention. Stop eating or

drinking. Put down your mobile device. Keep your focus on your driving.

- Expect the unexpected. When you drive in work zones, it's always best to prepare yourself for something unexpected, such as aggressive actions by other motorists, construction vehicles that slow down to leave the roadway and pull into the work area, dump trucks that emerge from the work area and enter your lane up ahead, workers operating scant inches from your path, uneven pavement lanes and loose gravel on the road surface to name just a few. When you anticipate problems, you are better able to react to them appropriately.
- Keep your cool. Be patient. Maintain calm. Don't get rattled by work zone situations. Always make sure your speed is appropriate to the situation; that could be slower than the posted limit. Finally, don't lose your patience or your temper. If you keep your cool, you and everyone else will make it through the work zone and arrive safely at their destinations.

*Toolboxtalks*

## Taking care of your emotional health

### Take the following steps to cope with a disaster:

- Take care of your body— Try to eat healthy well-balanced meals, exercise regularly and get plenty of sleep. Avoid alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.
- Connect with others— Share your concerns and how you are feeling with a friend or family member. Maintain healthy relationships and build a strong support system.
- Take breaks— Make time to unwind and remind yourself that strong feelings will fade. Try taking in deep breaths. Try to do activities you usually enjoy.
- Stay informed— When you feel that you are missing information, you may become

more stressed or nervous. Watch, listen to, or read the news for updates from officials. Be aware that there may be rumors during a crisis, especially on social media. Always check your sources and turn to reliable sources of information like your local government authorities.

- Avoid too much exposure to news— Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories. It can be upsetting to hear about the crisis and see images repeatedly. Try to do enjoyable activities and return to normal life as much as possible and check for updates between breaks. *cdc.gov*

## COVID-19: Choosing safer activities

- If you are fully vaccinated, you can start doing many things that you had stopped doing because of the pandemic. The CDC has lifted the requirement for wearing face masks in most situations.
- When choosing safer activities, consider how COVID-19 is spreading in your community, the number of people participating in

the activity and the location of the activity.

- Outdoor visits and activities are safer than indoor activities and fully vaccinated people can participate in some indoor events safely, without much risk.
- If you haven't been vaccinated yet, find a vaccine. *cdc.gov*

## Understanding Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD)

**AUD** is a medical condition characterized by an impaired ability to stop or control alcohol use despite adverse social, occupational, or health consequences. It encompasses the conditions that some people refer to as alcohol abuse, alcohol dependence, alcohol addiction and/or alcoholism. Considered a brain disorder, AUD can be mild, moderate, or severe.

**What Increases AUD Risk?** A person's risk for developing AUD depends, in part, on how much, how often and how quickly they consume alcohol. Drinking excessively, which includes binge drinking and heavy alcohol use. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) defines binge drinking as a pattern of drinking alcohol that brings blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to 0.08 percent—or 0.08 grams of alcohol per deciliter—or higher. For a typical adult, this pattern corresponds to consuming 5 or more drinks (male), or 4 or more drinks (female), in about 2 hours. and NIAAA defines heavy alcohol use as consuming more than 4 drinks on any day for men or more than 3 drinks for women over time increases the risk of AUD. Other factors also increase the risk of AUD, such as:

**Early Age Drinking:** A recent national survey ... among people ages 26 and older, those who began drinking before age 15 were more than 5 times as likely to report having AUD in the past year as those who waited until age 21 or later to begin drinking. The risk for females in this group is higher than that of males.

**Genetics/Family History:** Genetics play a role with heritability approx. 60% ; however, like other chronic health conditions, AUD risk is influenced by the interplay between a person's genes and their environment. Parents' drinking patterns may also influence the likelihood that a child will one day develop AUD.

**Mental Health and History of Trauma:** A wide range of psychiatric conditions including depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder are comorbid with AUD and are associated with an increased risk of AUD. People with a history of childhood trauma are also vulnerable to AUD.

**Types of Treatment?** Treatment can be outpatient and/or inpatient and be provided by specialty programs, therapists and doctors.

**Medications:** There are medications currently approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to help people stop or reduce their drinking and prevent relapse.

**Behavioral Treatments:** Behavioral treatments/talk therapy provided by licensed therapists are aimed at changing drinking behavior. (Example: brief interventions and reinforcement approaches, treatments that build motivation and teach skills for coping and preventing relapse and mindfulness-based therapies.)

**Mutual-Support Groups:** provide peer support for stopping or reducing drinking. Group meetings are available in most communities, at low or no cost, at convenient times and locations including an increasing presence online. They can be especially helpful to individuals at risk for relapse to drinking. Mutual-support groups can offer a valuable added layer of support. *nih.gov*

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