



Idealease Safety Bulletin

June 6, 2008

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Employer-Driver relations play a key roll in protecting a company's liability exposure when operating commercial motor vehicles. Recently, the FMCSA has issued warning to the industry regarding a drug used to stop smoking. The FMCSA issued the following advisory on May 23, 2008 regarding the smoking cessation drug Chantix:

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's (FMCSA) regulations for the medical qualification of interstate truck and bus drivers prohibit the use of prescribed substances or drugs that adversely affect the driver's ability to safely operate a commercial motor vehicle.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approves medications for use, and has recently issued a public health advisory on Chantix (Varenicline). FMCSA's rules defer to the physicians and health care professionals to determine driver medical fitness for duty, which includes when a medication has actual and potential side effects that could impact safe driving.

While we do not name any medications, such as Chantix, in FMCSA regulations, it appears that medical examiners should NOT certify a driver taking Chantix because the medication may adversely affect the driver's ability to safely operate a commercial motor vehicle.

We are committed to ensuring safety on America's highways and we will continue our ongoing effort to review all FMCSA medical standards, including prescription drugs.

RoadCheck 2008 concluded yesterday; however, keep the emphasis rolling with your drivers on their inspections and compliance. Pre and Post Trip inspections are more valuable today to a carrier then ever before!!!!

Benefits

- **Better fuel mileage by catching low or under inflated tires and defects that could rob the engines power.**
- **Making sure the vehicle is in safe operating condition. Accident litigation settlements are at an all time industry record high.**

As an employer of drivers, what can we do to protect our employees and the liability of the company regarding prescription drugs? The company should provide training and guidance to all drivers of the exposures that exist in driving a vehicle under the influence of any drug that has side effects that will effect their safe driving. Prescription medicine may be allowed to be used by drivers; however, the FMCSA has outlined minimum standards that must be followed when using these drugs:

1. The medicine is prescribed to you by a licensed physician, such as your personal doctor.
2. The treating/prescribing physician has made a good faith judgment that the use of the substance at the prescribed or authorized dosage level is consistent with the safe performance of your duties.
As a Best Practice, it is a good idea as the employer to provide the drivers with a detailed job description that outlines a driver's responsibilities and duties in operating a vehicle safely so it can be provided to the doctor. By providing this document, the doctor will understand functions of the driver and how the drug may interact.
3. The substance is used at the dosage prescribed or authorized.
4. If you are being treated by more than one physician, you must show that at least one of the treating doctors has been informed of all prescribed and authorized medications and has determined that the use of the medications is consistent with the safe performance of your duties.
5. Taking the prescription medication and performing your DOT safety-sensitive functions is not prohibited by agency drug and alcohol regulations. However, other DOT agency regulations may have prohibitive provisions, such as medical certifications.

HURRICANE

Hurricane Season is Here!!!

June 1st was the official start date of the 2008 hurricane season that runs through November 30th. Tropical Storm Arthur became the first named storm of the 2008 Hurricane season. With 15 named storms predicted, now is the time to prepare. If we have learned anything from prior storms, preparation is critical. Now is the time to re-evaluate emergency plans and update as needed. The information below should help your company and employees as well to prepare now to make steps to minimize loss in the event of a major hurricane this year. Below are selected links to information to help you prepare for and recover from hurricanes and tropical storms.

1. National Hurricane Center

<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>

2. Weather Channel.com

The Weather Channel's comprehensive storm site, complete with a drop-down menu of satellite photos and computer-generated projection maps.

<http://www.weather.com/newscenter/tropical/stormdetails.html>

3. FEMA Hurricane Background And Preparedness Information

Comprehensive information on disaster planning and recovery, provided by the Federal Emergency Management Administration.

<http://www.fema.gov/hazard/hurricane/index.shtml>

http://www.livescience.com/environment/hurricane_prepare.html

4. Google Automatic Hurricane News Alert

Simply enter your email address and Google News will automatically email hurricane updates to you. (We have entered the topic "Hurricane Update" for you.)

<http://www.google.com/newsalerts?q=hurricane+update&hl=en>

5. Hurricane Preparedness Planning For Businesses

This document contains information useful before, during and after a storm. Included in the document are templates for assigning tasks and responsibilities to staff members, as well as recommendations for developing a comprehensive plan.

<http://www.harriscountycitizencorps.com/newsletters/hurricaneplanforbusinesses.pdf>

6. Key Facts About Hurricane Recovery

This five-page document from the CDC explains how to recognize and protect against the health and safety hazards inherent in post-storm situations.

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/pdf/recovery.pdf>

7. Sites To Share With Employees On Preparing Their Homes

<http://www.hurricanesafety.org/home2.cfm>

http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/HAW2/english/disaster_prevention.shtml