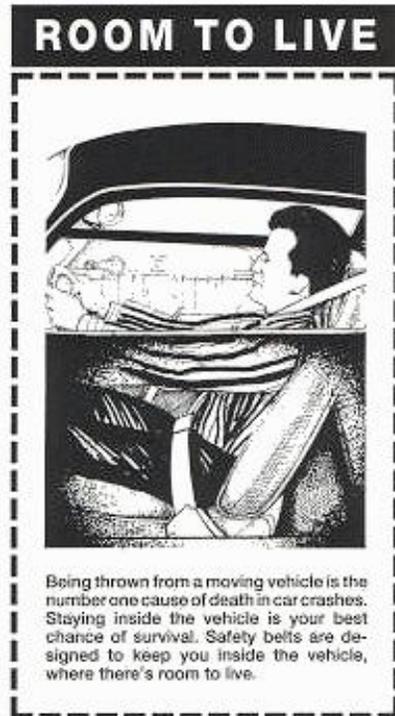


March 2008

RM News & Notes

Tip of the Week:



The Human Collision

Imagine running as fast as you can - into a wall. You'd expect to get pretty banged up. Do you think you could stop yourself if the wall suddenly loomed up when you were two feet away from it? This is exactly the situation you face when the front of your car hits something at only 15 miles an hour. The car stops in the first tenth of a second, but you keep on at the same rate you were going in the car until something stops *you* - the steering wheel, dashboard or windshield - if you're not wearing your safety belt.. Bad enough at 15 miles an hour, but a 30 miles you hit "the wall" four times as hard as you would at 15. Or to put it another way, **with the same impact you'd feel as if you fell three stories.**

A properly worn safety belt keeps that second collision - the human collision - from happening.

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Message from the Risk Manager

The topic of this month's newsletter was a special request from a fellow employee who was friends with one of the three young ladies involved the fatal vehicle accident on their way back to Georgia Southern. Instead of our usual "lesson learned" story, with her permission, I've chosen to share her words explaining why she was unable to submit the safety story and expressing thoughts and reactions to these recent tragic events in our community. We can't know if seat belts could have prevented this tragedy, but it is a proven fact that seat belts increase your chance of surviving a vehicle collision. Remember, driving is the most dangerous thing that most of us do on a daily basis. Please take every reasonable precaution to protect yourself so that maybe your friends and family won't have to go through the suffering experienced by many in our community today.

Darlene

Seatbelts: Why You Should Use Them

Most vehicles have several occupant protection systems. In order to get the greatest protection available from these systems, it is important to use them properly.

Seat belts help protect you in several ways: They absorb the force of the crash and also distribute this force over the stronger and larger parts of your body, such as the chest, hips and shoulders. The seat belt also stretches slightly to cushion the impact of the rapid descent from a crash. The difference between the belted person's stopping distance and the *unbelted* person's stopping distance is significant. It's often the difference between life and death.

Seat belts help keep you in control of the vehicle by keeping you in your seat. In fact, seat belts **increase** your chance of surviving a crash by more than 50%. Arguably the most important feature of the seat belt is that they keep you secured in the "protected" passenger compartment of the vehicle rather than possibly being thrown out or ejected. For those who think they would rather be "thrown clear": 75% of all crashes where a person is thrown from the vehicle are fatal. **Fatal!!!** And trust me, the other 25% don't get away uninjured.

Everyone must be properly buckled up using lap and shoulder belts or the appropriate child safety seat. Unbelted passengers may become "human missiles" during a crash causing injury to themselves and others.

- ✓ Lap belts should be low and across the hips.
- ✓ Shoulder belts should be snug across the chest.
- ✓ Infants and younger children should be in the back seat and properly buckled into an appropriate child safety seat.

Seats should remain upright. During a crash, if the seat is reclined, you may slide out or under the belt or it may catch you across the neck as you slide forward.

Seat belts plus air bags offer the best protection during a crash. But realize that the air bag system is supplemental to the seat belts. Never depend on your air bag for protection without using the seat belt. In fact: air bags have been involved in some serious injuries usually resulting from lack of or incorrect seat belt use or sitting too close to the steering wheel. Follow these safety tips when driving a vehicle with the air bag system:

- ✓ Move your seat back so that your chest is **at least** 10 inches away from the steering wheel.
- ✓ If you have a tilt steering wheel, adjust it toward your chest, not at your head or face.
- ✓ Properly buckle both the lap and shoulder belt.
- ✓ Remember children and infants should be properly buckled in the back seat. If an older child must ride in the front seat, make sure they are properly buckled up and slide the seat back as far away from the airbag as possible.
- ✓ Never, ever place an infant in the front seat in a rear-facing infant seat where there is an operational airbag. If a crash occurs, the airbag may strike the rear facing infant seat with enough force to seriously harm a baby.

Lock all doors. A locked door is less likely to come open during a crash.

Don't forget to properly adjust the head restraint so that it supports and cushions the head and neck. If it is too low and sits at the back of the neck rather than supporting the head, there may be an increased "whiplash" effect, especially in the event of a rear-end collision.

The occupant restraint systems are there to protect you, but they only work if you use them.

BUCKLE UP!

I wanted to encourage everyone to wear their seat belt but I haven't been able to work on the story yet. The loss is still very fresh and when I try to sit down and compose some words together, it becomes very difficult. I just keep thinking of those 3 young lives that have been lost and cannot even imagine how their families are just getting from one day to the next. My youngest son is their same age and attends Ga. Southern. Both of my boys were on a swim team with one of these girls for 10 years, so we watched this young lady grow up and know the family quite well. Her funeral was sad, but also a beautiful celebration of her life...one taken too soon. We don't know that wearing their seat belts would have saved these three girls, but it would have given them a fighting chance. I guess that is the point I would want to get across. Drive as if your life depends on it...as it does and buckle up to give yourself the best possible chance of survival should an accident occur.

Up Coming Events

Each program is advertised by Risk Management and is available to employees of Columbia County Board of Commissioners and the city employees of Grovetown and Harlem. Additionally, the Defensive Driving Courses may be attended by immediate family members of employees, on a space available basis, for a nominal fee.

Pre-registration is required.

For additional information or to register contact Risk Management. 706-312-7475

Safety Review Board April 17, 2008

Defensive Driving
Course – 8 hour March 20, 2008
May 27, 2008

Defensive Driving
Course – 4 hour May 8, 2008

CPR/AED/First Aid April 29, 2008

County Office Closed May 26, 2008

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Newsy Notes

Shamrock (Irish *Seamrog*, "little clover"), common name for any of several trifoliate clovers native to Ireland. The shamrock was originally chosen as the national emblem of Ireland because of the legend that Saint Patrick used the plant to illustrate the doctrine of the Trinity. Most shamrocks, particularly the small-leaved white clover, have been considered by the Irish as good-luck symbols since earliest times, and this superstition has persisted in modern times among people of many nationalities. Shamrocks or various representations of the plant are worn by celebrants on Saint Patrick's Day, March 17 of each year. The hop clover is widely accepted as the original shamrock picked by Saint Patrick.

