**TOOLBOX TALK - Auto Accident Procedures**

According to the **National Safety Council**, the odds of dying in an auto accident are 1 in 114. This is a frightening number considering how frequent we see accidents happen on the roads. Auto accidents are unfortunate events that no-one wants to be involved in.

The best way to prevent auto accidents is to **drive defensively**. This means you should avoid distractions, stay alert, look down the road, avoid following too close, and anticipate other drivers’ actions. Although you can do everything right, you still may find yourself involved in an accident at one point in your life. Therefore, it is vital to be prepared for how you should react, what you should do and not do following an accident.

## ****Taking Proactive Steps in Case an Accident Occurs****

One of the best ways to minimize the impact of an accident is to be prepared for the accident prior to it taking place. Some steps to take include:

* Items such as medical information, driver’s license, insurance, and vehicle registration should be up to date and readily accessible.
* Remove or properly secure loose items in your vehicle to prevent the possibility of them flying around during impact.
* Keep your cell phone charged and readily available to dial 911 and to take photos of the scene.
* Consider keeping a first aid kit and emergency seat belt cutter/window breaker tool in your vehicle.
* Maintain paper, pens, or pencils in your vehicle to document other vehicle and witness information.

## ****Procedures After an Accident Occurs****

* If the accident occurs at a busy location such as a freeway or intersection, move your vehicle to a safe location, if possible, to avoid causing secondary accidents. If moving is not possible, use your hazard lights to alert oncoming traffic of the hazard.
* Place your vehicle in park and take a moment to relax. Be aware of your surroundings and be sure no electrical wires are on your vehicle or other hazardous conditions exist prior to exiting your vehicle.
* If you have road flares or traffic triangles, consider using them to alert oncoming traffic.
* Check on others involved. Be sure that other vehicle occupants and pedestrians in the area are not injured. Dial 911 immediately if someone is injured and request an ambulance.
* Call the police to the scene and **notify your employer**. Even with minor accidents, having an officer come to the scene to create a police report and properly document information will assist later when dealing with insurance companies.
* Avoid admitting fault and apologizing to others at the accident scene. Allow the police to objectively judge events that took place and determine fault of the accident.
* Gather as much information as you can. Important items to document include:
  + Driver and passenger full names
  + Insurance information
  + Makes, models, and license plate numbers of all vehicles involved
  + Contact information for any eyewitnesses
* Document the scene by taking photos and videos of not only the vehicles, but the entire scene. Include documentation of road signs, traffic lights, and the complete external environment around where the accident took place. Doing so will assist with the investigation and allow the insurance company to better understand what took place.

### **Summary**

Following an accident, drivers, and passengers may experience an adrenaline rush that could disguise injuries and alter your ability to think straight. Therefore, being prepared and understanding pre and post-accident procedures is important. You should refer to the company-specific procedures should you have any questions prior to being involved in an accident.

#### **Discussion points:**

1. What else can we do to be better prepared in the case that an accident occurs?
2. Why is it important to not admit fault or apologize at the accident scene?