

Are we driving ourselves too fast?



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The most dangerous product that you or your employees will ever use in the lawn/landscape industry isn't a pesticide. It's not a mower or chain saw. It's your service vehicle.

Think about it. You the driver, or occupant, are strapped inside of a shell of steel, plastic and glass. You and this mass of molded sheet metal hurdle along a narrow ribbon of pavement, almost always at potentially lethal speeds.

That's scary enough even without the hundreds, perhaps thousands, of other cars and trucks that you'll be sharing that pavement with.

Don't even think about the condition of your vehicle. Or, the condition of the other cars and trucks. What about your condition? How about the mental or emotional condition of the operators of the other vehicles? Sleepy? Angry? Hung over?

There's real risk in just getting our lawn care and landscape to our customers.

Every day we should remind ourselves and our employees about road safety because, it seems to me anyway, that this risk is growing. Traffic on our roads is multiplying, especially in the suburbs and surrounding areas where demand for our services still is greatest. Can you think of a road in your service area that used to be a snap to drive, but you now avoid when you can? Getting to job sites is even tougher now that road construction season is here.

But, it's not unsafe roads or unsafe vehicles that cause most road accidents. It's unsafe drivers. Aggressive driving is epidemic. Many drivers see nothing at all wrong with speeding and tailgating.

Never mind that the speed limit on most highways has been bumped up from 55 mph to 65 mph; it's still not fast enough for some drivers, perhaps even for some of your employees.

Considering the added difficulty and liability in operating vehicles that deliver chemical products

[LAWN/LANDSCAPE]

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or pull trailers containing construction and maintenance equipment, the responsibility to make sure your vehicles are both properly maintained and safely operated is great.

Many of us, of course, check the driving records of potential employees. Many of us have drug testing programs in our companies. But neither addresses the problem of aggressive, unsafe driving.

Constant reminders about defensive driving--perhaps driver training for those who don't understand the concept--belong in our training programs. **LM**

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