

## TRANSPORTATION SAFETY NEWS

### NTSB hosts forum on drowsy driving

Washington – Drowsy driving poses significant threats to worker safety and health and must be combated, a panel of experts told the National Transportation Safety Board on Oct. 21.

NTSB hosted a daylong forum titled, "Awake, Alert, Alive: Overcoming the Dangers of Drowsy Driving," which included a session regarding workplace policies and practices.

The oil and gas industry and the telecommunications industry are particularly vulnerable to drowsy driving because workers often have to make lengthy trips to and from worksites at unusual hours of the day, said Stephanie Pratt, coordinator of the NIOSH Center for Motor Vehicle Safety. She said NIOSH plans to survey oil and gas workers and telecommunications workers about their commuting behaviors and on-the-job driving requirements.

Pratt's other points included:

- Risks of drowsy driving affect workers other than commercial motor vehicle drivers.
- Shift work, long work hours, long hours of driving during the workday, on-call duty and commuting may exacerbate those risks.
- Little is known regarding the effects of long hours of work-related driving combined with lengthy commutes. These two groups of workers spend much time in rural, unpopulated areas with vast distances to cover in a vehicle.

The workplace session also included presentations by David Flower, senior health director of BP International; and John Violanti, research professor at the University at Buffalo.

How are your workers doing with their long distance or late night driving tasks? Are they as safe as they can be? For more information on this subject or any other risk management subject please contact Unitel Risk Management Department.