DOZING OFF AT THE WHEEL CAN HAVE TERRIBLE CONSEQUENCES

Mr Teo Yong Hwang shares the story of his accident, which taught him that all drivers should take care of their safety and health both on and off the road every day.

Mr Teo Yong Hwang has been working as a prime mover driver for more than 30 years, transporting loose cargo from port to port. On 8 August 2011, he was driving on the highway when another prime mover suddenly turned into his lane, nearly crashing into him. “I didn’t have enough sleep,” said Mr Teo. “I had been working night shifts for about 1 to 2 weeks... So when [the other prime mover] drove past, I jolted awake. Immediately, I tried to swerve my vehicle.”

He acted too late. While he avoided hitting the prime mover, the momentum sent his vehicle crashing into the expressway barrier. He was thrown forward in his seat. His steering wheel, positioned at waist level, hit his stomach painfully. He managed to undo his seatbelt and stagger out of his vehicle onto the road, where he fell unconscious.

When he woke up, he was in a hospital. He had suffered a blow to his stomach, a concussion and other minor injuries. The first thing he did was to call his wife, who lives in Thailand. “She was shocked,” he recalled. “She said, ‘I want you to come home on your own two feet, not in an urn’.”

Her words made him re-examine his life and what was truly important. He resolved to make safety his top priority. Although some drivers rush to finish more trips, Mr Teo understands the importance of rest. “If I had been more alert, the accident might not have happened,” he reflected.

Today, Mr Teo drives carefully, taking care to look out for other vehicles. He also makes sure he gets sufficient rest, sometimes parking his vehicle in public carparks to take short naps. He hopes that by sharing his story, drivers will understand the importance of rest and staying alert when driving so that they can return home safely to their loved ones at the end of each workday.

In This Issue

9 out of 25 workplace fatalities from January to June 2013 were work-related traffic accidents. Learn how to protect yourself on the road.

Safety Tips for Drivers

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Find out how you can avoid road accidents during work.

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Don’t take workplace safety and health for granted!

Protect yourself so that you can return home safe after work every day. If you are asked to work unsafely, call the MOM hotline: 6317 1111.
SAFETY TIPS FOR **DRIVERS**

- Wear your seatbelt when driving.
- Drive within the speed limit.
- Do not tailgate. Keep a space between your vehicle and the vehicle in front.
- Do not overload. Load within weight and height limits.
- Do not drive when tired or sleepy. Have enough rest.
- Do not use your handphone while driving. Stay alert and focus while driving.
**BE PATIENT ON THE ROAD**

**AMBASSADOR FOR SAFE RIDING**

Alan Ho has been a despatch rider with his company since 2010, clocking up to 80 deliveries a day. On 17 December 2011, as part of his usual route, he turned at a junction. Suddenly, his motorcycle skidded on a patch of sand. He crashed to the ground. As he lay prone, he was aware of a lack of feeling in his left arm.

At the hospital, doctors informed him that his elbow joint had been shattered by the impact. He endured a seven hour operation where his elbow joint was replaced with a metal one. A painful half year of rehabilitation followed, where he would visit the clinic three times a week to learn to reuse his arm.

But more than the physical pain, the father of three feared that he would no longer be able to work. “My children were very worried,” he said as he recalled his days in the hospital. “Friends, my family, my employer — they all said ‘don’t ride anymore’.”

Thankfully, he recovered well and was able to continue working, but the accident has left scars. Till today, he cannot straighten his arm or lift objects weighing more than 10kg.

These days, Alan has become an ambassador for safe riding to his peers, encouraging them to check the condition of their motorcycles before a delivery, and stay focused while driving. By sharing his story, he hopes that other “roadriders” will learn to ride carefully and never take their safety for granted. “Be patient on the road,” Alan advises.

“A few seconds to a minute might save a life, or cost a life.”

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**CASE STUDIES**

**Case Study 1**

**Never Assume that You Have the Right of Way**

**What happened?**

A driver was on his way back to his company’s workshop when he stopped at a traffic junction. When the traffic light turned green, he assumed the way was clear and started driving. However, he never made it back. His vehicle was hit by a cement truck seconds later. He was taken to Tan Tock Seng Hospital for treatment but died from his injuries.

**What was the cause?**

- The cement truck driver was speeding.
- Although the deceased had right of way, he assumed the road was clear and drove off without checking his surroundings when the traffic light turned green.

**What can we learn to protect ourselves as drivers?**

- Check all blind spots and mirrors.
- Always obey all traffic rules and signs.

**Case Study 2**

**If You Do Not Pay Attention while Driving, You Can Pay with Your Life**

**What happened?**

A lorry driver was on a delivery trip with a passenger when his lorry collided with a car at a junction. The impact of the collision caused the two vehicles to hit two other stationary cars. The lorry passenger sustained severe head injuries and died on the spot.

**What was the cause?**

- The drivers did not pay attention to their surroundings.
- The drivers did not check for other moving vehicles at the junction.

**What can we learn to protect ourselves as drivers?**

- Check all blind spots and mirrors when approaching junctions.
- Always watch out for other road users at junctions.
- Always signal early.
- Always stay alert while driving.
Never leave valuables near openings in your house, such as windows or doors, which are within reach of outsiders.

Ensure all gates, doors, windows and other openings are secured with good quality grilles and/or padlocks.

Lock your door and window grilles before going to sleep or when no one is at home.

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