



# SAFETY ADVISOR

FEBRUARY 2013

## February

### Computers and Your Eyes

**Can looking at computer screens damage your eyes?**

No. While complaints of eye fatigue and discomfort are common among computer users, these symptoms are not caused by the computer screen itself. Computer screens give off little or no harmful radiation (such as x-rays or UV rays). All levels of radiation from computer screens are below levels that can cause eye damage such as cataracts.

**Can looking at a computer screen cause eyestrain?**

Fatigue, dry eyes, bad lighting, or how you sit in front of the computer can cause eyestrain. Symptoms of

eyestrain include sore or irritated eyes and difficulty focusing. You may also have symptoms of eyestrain if you need glasses or a change in your glasses.

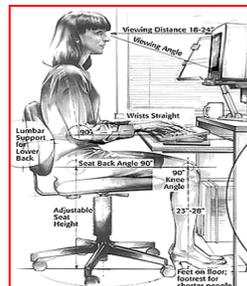


**What can you do to prevent eyestrain?**

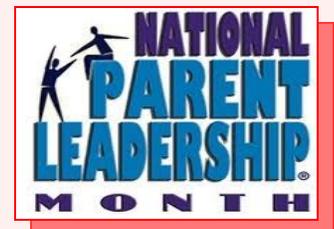
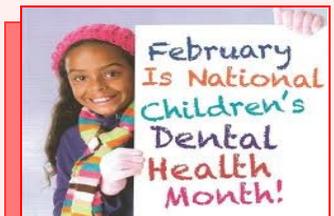
You can help prevent eyestrain by making changes to your computer workspace and by visiting your eye doctor. Here are a few suggestions on how to make your workspace more comfortable:

- Place your screen 20 to 26 inches away from your eyes and a little bit below eye level.

- Use a document holder placed next to your computer screen. It should be close enough so you don't have to swing your head back and forth or constantly change your eye focus.
- Change your lighting to lower glare and harsh reflections. Glare filters over your computer screen can also help.
- Choose screens that can tilt and swivel. A keyboard that you can adjust is also helpful.
- Get a chair you can adjust.



<http://www.eyedoctorguide.com/>



#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Your Eyes</i>	1
<i>Reaching The Finish Line</i>	2
<i>Growing Older, Driving</i>	5
<i>Vision and Driving</i>	6
<i>Safety Slogan</i>	7
<i>Word Search</i>	8
<i>Survey</i>	9
<i>Calendar</i>	10

# Reaching the Finish Line

**John Garofalo**

**District 4**

**Environmental Health and Safety Administrator**

As I write this, it has been one year, 365 days, since I had open heart surgery-triple arterial by-pass to be exact. I was lucky. I did not have a heart attack, only a tired feeling while walking. I was a smoker for the 35 years proceeding. I officially quit 2 days before my surgery.

During my recovery, I had made a pledge, last March, to complete a half marathon (13.1 miles) this January. Actually, it was a deal. One of my friends would quit smoking and I would complete the ½ marathon. My friend did quit smoking last April. So, I began to train to compete. My girlfriend Laura agreed to participate too. We trained together when we could. (The event was Sunday, January 20, 2013).

I was walking regularly and playing tennis. Then something happened. My left ankle swelled and hurt a lot. It stayed that way for a month while I tried various means to reduce the swelling. Finally an MRI revealed that I had a significantly torn tendon. (And 2 other minor tears.) This meant yet another doctor and a cast/black boot for 7 weeks. Not much fun. I had another 4 weeks in an ankle brace. I also sprained my ankle the last week I wore the brace! We all face setbacks and this was to be a lesson to me. Despite these complications, I had a goal and I was going to meet it.

It was early December when I could resume my training. My first long walk-4.5 miles, was painful the whole way. Actually, my first two weeks of walking any distance (2-6 miles) was painful. Nevertheless, I kept at it. My doctor warned me to slow down and build up in steps. I followed this advice the best I could, but still knew I needed to get ready for the half marathon. I purchased new running/walking shoes to help with the pain. They did help considerably.

I kept walking and the pain slowly subsided. Then, two weeks before the event, I walked 9 miles. It felt great! Then 2 days later, I walked 10 miles...it also felt great! I knew I could finish the 13.1 miles! The week before the marathon, I walked no more than 3 miles on any given day. I was saving energy for the big day. I did buy special socks (padded and vented) along with nutrient "beans" to nibble on during the event form an energy boost.

# FINISH LINE

The half marathon was held in Key West. Arriving on Saturday, the day before was good and bad. Good because we were staying a short walk from the starting line. Bad because we were not able to experience a typical Saturday night in Key West! We did find an excellent pasta place to eat (it was amazing!). We were advised to eat carbohydrates the night before for added energy. This was the easiest part of training!!!

Before bed, I carefully (maybe slightly obsessively) went over everything I would need the next day...shoes, socks, shorts, energy bars, placard with my registration number, etc.

The alarm sounded at 5 AM on Sunday morning. The big day! Everything I had laid out the night before was double-checked. Next I had coffee, water and a small bagel. After showering and dressing, it was 6:15 AM and time to leave the hotel for the starting line. Once there it seemed like only a minute or so before a loud cannon went off! It was time to start!!! The runners quickly passed us!

We quickly took up position at the end of the group and continued the entire distance. It was not easy, as my feet hurt, but the pain was minimal compared to the reward of completing the 13.1 miles. Reaching the finish line was amazing!! What a great feeling to set a goal and achieve it. I had never even considered such an event before my surgery.

Reaching the finish line made me reflect on what is possible and how much hard work pays off. I believe anything is possible if we set our mind to it. *"Can't"* is usually more accurately *"Won't"*. Likewise, *"impossible"* usually means *"don't want to"*. One thing that really made me take notice of this at the ½ marathon was the man (Vance Gerkovich) who completed the race on a specially adapted recumbent bicycle-which looks similar to a wheelchair. And guess what? He beat my finish time by more than 2 hours!!! He was the victim of a car accident five years ago and was pronounced DOA at the time...pretty amazing comeback if you ask me! His participation in the event proved to me once again that no matter what your circumstances, there is always someone dealing with something worse!

My hope is that this story will inspire you to push your limits and set your goals high. Once we decide to, we can accomplish anything. I am already planning my next ½ marathon-after I complete the West Palm Beach Corporate Run in April.

**FINISH LINE**



## Growing Older, Driving Safely

Safe driving requires complex visual processing – abilities that may begin to decline as we age. A loss in your visual abilities could endanger you and others on the road. But you can maintain your independence and drive safely longer if you:

- Get a complete eye exam regularly;
- Know the vision issues that can affect your driving;
- Understand the laws in your state about driving as you age;
- Talk to your eye doctor about maintaining your fitness to drive;

It is important to note that visual processing is but one component of safe driving. Other key factors include:

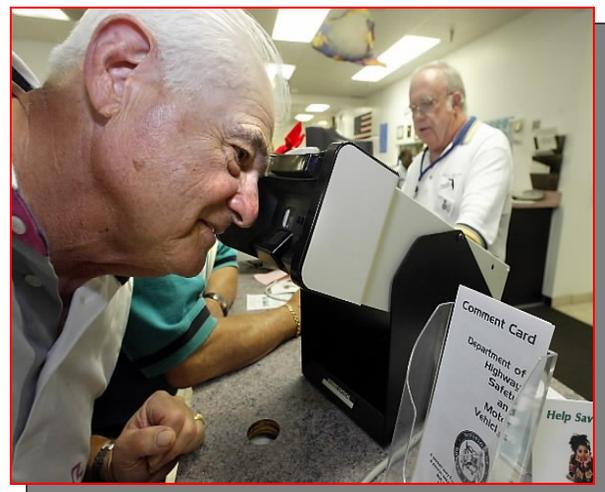
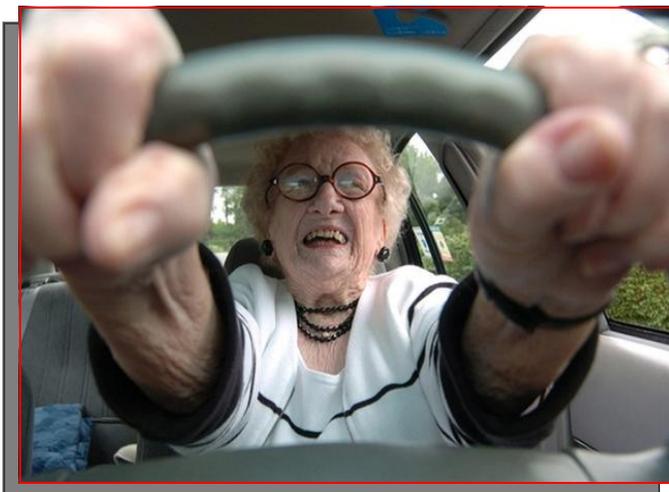
- The motor ability to scan rapidly changing environments;
- The sensory ability to perceive information in a rapidly changing environment;
- The attentiveness to process multiple pieces of information;
- The cognitive and motor ability to judge information in a timely fashion and to make appropriate decisions;

<http://www.webmd.com>

## In the State of Florida, all drivers who are 80 years .....

All drivers who are 80 years of age or older and who are in the process of renewing their driver license are required to pass a vision test. The test may be administered at the driver license office at no additional charge or by your Florida licensed health care practitioner, such as your medical doctor, osteopath or optometrist. A vision examination report must be completed and submitted to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles if your vision test is administered by your doctor. Drivers 80 and older will receive a license with a six year term.

[flhsmv.gov](http://flhsmv.gov)





# ***Vision and Driving***

## **Visual Acuity**

Visual acuity makes it possible for you to notice moving and still objects that you must see, and often notice quickly, to make safe driving decisions. With good acuity, you can read traffic signs, street names, and addresses at a distance with time to react safely to conditions. You also rely on your visual acuity to see any object or hazard on or near the road.

## **Vision in Low Contrast Situations**

Low-contrast visual acuity lets you see and drive safely in rain, fog, or at dusk. Objects do not always stand out clearly from their surroundings, such as potholes, cars without lights on at dusk, pedestrians crossing in front of you in the rain, and almost anything at night not directly in range of your headlights. When your visual acuity for low-contrast objects decreases, you may not be able to see potential dangers soon enough to respond safely.

## **Keeping Track of Visual Information**

When driving, you must scan your surroundings constantly for potential conflicts with other road users. At the same time, you must pay attention to road features like traffic signs and signals, and landmarks or other information that helps you find your way as you drive. This is most important at intersections, where the majority of serious crashes occur. When you are about to start moving after a traffic light turns green, you look to your left and right and then across the intersection in the direction you're driving. Being able to locate safety threats quickly and make immediate driving decisions based on information from many different places is a critical part of driving.

What you are aware of in your field of view, and how quickly you become aware of it, can determine whether or not you can drive safely and avoid crashing at an intersection, a shopping center parking lot, or in any driving situation. If your ability to keep track of and process visual information decreases with age, you may have problems identifying and reacting to safety threats.

## **Visit an eye doctor regularly**

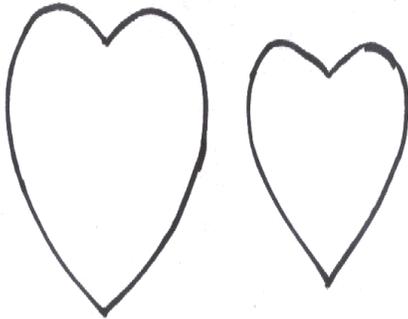
One very important thing you can do to make sure you can drive safely longer is get your eyes checked regularly by an eye doctor at least once every other year if you are 55 or older. You should visit your eye doctor even if you have no problems seeing, and talk to your eye doctor about driving and your vision.

<http://www.medscape.com>

# SAFETY SLOGAN

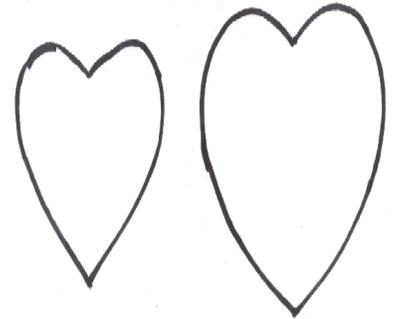
“ Safety isn’t expensive, it’s priceless.”

“Stay safe, someone at home is waiting for you.”

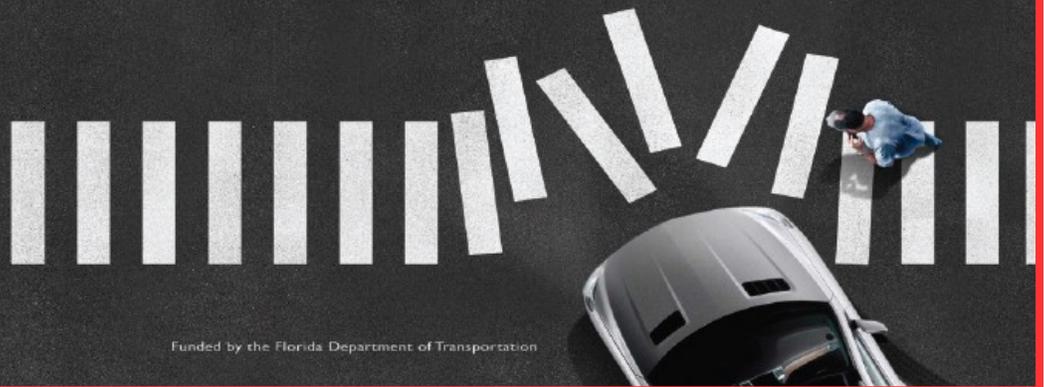
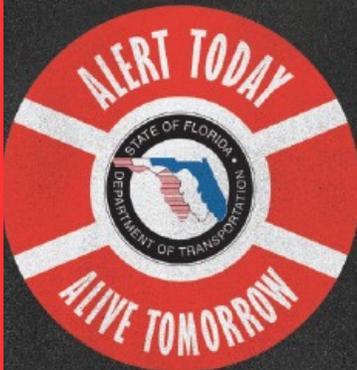


## **Safety Hot Line** **(850) 245-1543**

You can report hazards by telephone.  
You can remain anonymous.  
Everything is confidential.  
An investigation will follow and  
any necessary actions will be taken and  
you will be notified within 30 days if you  
so de- sire.



**SAFETY DOESN'T HAPPEN BY ACCIDENT.**



Funded by the Florida Department of Transportation

This monthly newsletter is produced by the State Safety Office by Mark Eacker.  
For content information, please call or email the editor, Mark Eacker, at:  
850-245-1510 / [mark.eacker@dot.state.fl.us](mailto:mark.eacker@dot.state.fl.us)  
Our internet address is: [www.dot.state.fl.us/safety](http://www.dot.state.fl.us/safety)  
Our intranet address is: [Infonet.dot.state.fl.us/safetyoffice/](http://Infonet.dot.state.fl.us/safetyoffice/)



# Word Search Puzzle

S F L Y H X P V O G X X F Y R J G H E D  
T R I P A L K L I K N K H A I S N L R L  
N Y L N G D A R S S N L D Q B F B I O S  
A N F L I F S N E M I I O V F A V S W C  
T H F A O S W T V T A O O C T I S A A R  
L S J R T X H M N T U N N S N P U C S E  
U E A U T I I L I E V P U G R I S U H E  
S G Y V H P G O I R D J M E A T L I I N  
N N D Q Q H N U U N D I V O T T P T N S  
O A Y H T N L L E A E E S G C M E Y G M  
C R O L S A F E T Y N D E E C A E C T O  
M O A R C D N M G T Y R E G R U S B O T  
L E A D E R S H I P P S F L Y P K E N P  
H R G B Z Q G O H D N U O R G F R N H M  
K I K T U B N L F Z P L J D N W Z G U Y  
S M A A O U B Y D H Y F U Y D K H S O S  
G E S N T O H K K T J R E C O V E R Y Q  
T H Y W R U Z F B X G Z H W V F V L J T  
Y M P E J O E X N D T R X Z T R A E H J  
L A T N E M N O R I V N E N P N G U H G

ACUITY  
ADJUSTABLE  
COMPUTER  
CONSULTANTS  
DRIVING  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
EYES  
FATIGUE  
FINISH LINE

GAROFALO  
GROUNDHOG  
HEALTH  
HEART  
LEADERSHIP  
LINCOLN  
LOSS PREVENTION  
ORANGES  
PRESIDENTS DAY

RADIATION  
RECOVERY  
SAFETY  
SCREENS  
SQUASH  
SURGERY  
SYMPTOMS  
VISION  
WASHINGTON

**The Safety Advisor puzzle is generated from the  
<http://school.discoveryeducation.com/>, puzzle maker.  
Omissions or errors are possible and are the sole responsibility of the program  
and not the producers of this Newsletter.**

**Safety Advisor Customer Satisfaction Survey**

**We are interested in your opinion. In order to better serve your needs, please take a moment to fill out this brief questionnaire. Send to:**

**Local Fax: 850 245-1554**

**Via US Postal Service (or inter-office mail) to the address shown below.**

**Attention: Industrial Safety  
Florida Department of Transportation  
605 Suwannee Street, MS 53  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0450**

Survey Questions	Yes	No
Are the Safety Advisor topics relevant to your day to day job?		
Do you use the Safety Advisor in any manner other than read it ?		

What would you suggest to improve the suitability of the Safety Advisor to your needs or to improve the overall quality? (Please be specific)

---

---

---

---

---

Do you have any questions regarding Industrial Safety programs and/or operations? Please feel free to include your questions or comments.

---

---

---

---

---

**Safety Slogan of the Month Entry Form**

**You are encouraged to submit safety slogans at any time.**

**Slogans are judged on originality.**

**You may also email your slogans to [mark.eacker@dot.state.fl.us](mailto:mark.eacker@dot.state.fl.us)  
In the subject line of your email please write "Safety Slogan Entry".**

Please Print  
Safety Slogan

---

---

---

---

---

---

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Location/Office: \_\_\_\_\_  
District: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30	31	1	2 Groundhog Day
3	4	5	6	7	8 PAY DAY	9
10	11	12 Lincoln's Birthday	13	14 Valentine's Day	15	16
17	18 Presidents Day	19	20	21 Washington's Birthday	22 PAY DAY	23
24	25	26	27	28	1	2

THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY	
February 2013 is Observed as	<a href="#">National African American History Month</a> , National Children's Dental Health, <a href="#">National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month</a> , <a href="#">American Heart Month</a> , National Wise Health Consumer, Parent Leadership Month
Birthstone	Amethyst
Fruit & Vegetables for the Month of February	Oranges, Star Fruit, Calabaza Squash, Chayote Squash, Bitter Melon
February Flower	Violet
Astrological Signs	Aquarius (till 18th) & Pisces (19th→)