



Cell Phone Policy Kit



Sample Article About Risks

Recommended Usage

The following article introduces the risks associated with using cell phones while driving. This could be used in an e-mail to employees, an intranet article, a company newsletter or a printed handout.

There Goes Gus Gizmo!

Gus Gizmo is busy today. Of course, he is busy every day. But, hey, no problem - Gus has all the latest toys to help him do eight things at once. His pride and joy is the newest cell phone on the market. He has a global positioning system (GPS) that gives him directions to his next stop, a hands-free device so he can talk on the phone and keep his hands on the wheel and also check and respond to e-mails. It includes easy Internet access so he can take care of mundane business such as paying bills during his long commute.

What are the odds Gus will get in a crash today while he's multitasking his way down a busy road? While talking on the phone, his odds are actually four times greater and it doesn't matter that he's using a hands-free device. The risks of talking and crashing are similar to those of using a handheld phone. His odds of crashing while e-mailing and paying bills are much, much higher. In fact, fatal crashes have happened when adult working drivers were doing exactly that – it's not just text messaging teens who are at risk.

Gus is one of the millions of drivers who have the high-tech tools enabling him to be on the road and in the office at the same time. This is a group of drivers safety experts and employers have been very worried about. Gus's gizmos are distracting him from driving his vehicle safely. They are:

- Taking his eyes off the road—a visual distraction
- Taking his mind off the road—a cognitive distraction
- Taking his hands off the wheel—a manual distraction

Gus has either forgotten or is unaware that driving requires his full attention to the road and its possible hazards. While he's looking away from the road for three seconds and driving 45 mph, he's traveling two-thirds the length of a football field. Think about the unexpected driving dangers that can happen while driving the length of a few football fields without paying attention.



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Driving is a risky activity. Each year, about 40,000 people are killed in motor vehicle crashes and more than 3 million people are injured. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that driver distraction is involved in 16 percent of fatal crashes. The National Safety Council estimates that 25 percent of all crashes are due to talking on cell phones while driving and another 3 percent are due to texting.

A national telephone survey conducted in August 2008 shows distracted driving has become an increasingly dangerous trend. Nearly all drivers—94 percent—reported engaging in potentially distracting activities while driving. Additionally, 39 percent of the respondents reported they primarily used their cell phones for work-related purposes.

These survey results highlight the need for increased involvement from employers, who often bear the costs when an employee is involved in a traffic crash. These crashes pose a major risk to employers of all sizes and ultimately affect the company's bottom line.

We are concerned for the safety of our employees. As a result, our company will be implementing a new policy prohibiting the use of cell phones while driving. Over the next several days, look for additional information regarding the risks of using cell phones behind the wheel and our new policy.

Disclaimer: Although the information and recommendations contained in this publication have been compiled from sources believed to be reliable, the National Safety Council makes no guarantee as to, and assumes no responsibility for, the correctness, sufficiency or completeness of such information or recommendations. Other or additional safety measures may be required under particular circumstances. Visit distracteddriving.nsc.org for the latest material and updated content for the Cell Phone Policy Kit.