



Cell Phone Policy Kit

Call to Action

Recommended Usage

This Call to Action language can be used to communicate the need for a cell phone use while driving policy in a variety of ways:

- Memo to employees or senior management
- Article in a newsletter or on a company intranet
- Background information for meetings and presentations

Problem

Cell phones are a growing factor in traffic crashes. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), driver distraction is involved in 16 percent of all fatal crashes. The National Safety Council estimates that talking on cell phones while driving is involved in 25 percent of all crashes and texting is involved in 3 percent. A Virginia Tech Transportation Institute study, which placed cameras in vehicles to show real driving situations, found that 75 percent of drivers committed a traffic violation while talking on the phone, while only 25 percent of drivers not on the phone committed a violation. These are driver errors that can increase crash risk. Cell phone users are four times more likely to be involved in injury crashes, according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

Currently, there are more than 270 million cell phone subscribers in the United States – 87 percent of people living in the United States now have a cell phone or PDA and use them while driving. NHTSA estimates 11 percent of drivers are using cell phones at any point in time during the day. According to a Nationwide Insurance Company survey, 3 out of 4 drivers admitted to talking on cell phones while driving and almost 1 out of 5 admitted to texting while driving.

Employers are increasingly being responsible for crashes involving employees who use cell phones while driving.

The risks and costs associated with cell phone use while driving will continue to grow in the coming years. So, what is an employer to do?



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Solution

The National Safety Council recommends employers issue an organization-wide policy prohibiting the use of cell phones while driving. The policy should state:

- Employees are not permitted to use electronic devices, either handheld or hands-free, while driving.
- Employees are not allowed to answer calls while driving. Incoming calls must be directed to voice mail.
- Employees are not allowed to read or respond to text messages and e-mails while driving.
- If it is necessary for an employee to make an emergency call (911), the employee must park the vehicle in a safe location before making the call.

Implementation

An effective policy and communication plan should:

- Educate employees about the risks associated with using cell phones while driving
- Require all employees to sign the policy
- Establish progressive penalties up to and including dismissal for violating the policy
- Suggest ways to reduce temptation to answer the phone while driving
- Suggest ways to maintain productivity and accessibility without using mobile devices while driving

Benefits

The benefits of implementing a policy include:

- Reductions in injuries to employees
- Reductions in lost time on the job
- Reduction in motor vehicle crashes, which is the No. 1 cause of work-related fatalities
- Lower costs associated with crashes. The average cost per crash is \$24,000; the average cost per crash injury is \$125,000.
- Less risk of liability for motor vehicle crashes

Recommended Actions

- Adopt a policy to prohibit cell phone use while driving and use the Cell Phone Policy Kit to help implement and communicate the policy.
- Establish a management committee to recommend penalties for non-compliance with the policy.
- Move immediately to implement the 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.