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## ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS:

### DRIVING SAFETY

Cell phone use and texting are two of the most common distractions that contribute to vehicle crashes. Business owners with employees driving for company business should have a policy in place that prohibits the use of cell phones and other devices that take away from the employees' main focus, which should be driving.

According to industry studies, Driver Distraction is a major factor in crashes, with an estimated 1 in 4 crashes involving cell phone distraction - hand-held or hands-free. Employees who use cell phones while driving expose themselves and others to a significant safety risk. A recent National Highway Traffic Safety Administration survey found drivers cite work-related communications as a main reason to use phones while driving. If a tool used by employees exposes them to a four times greater risk of injury, business owners should establish rules and guidelines to help reduce that risk. Businesses should take action to protect their employees. Distracted Driving Policies should be a part of every Safety and Injury Prevention Program.

### Myths and Facts about Distracted Driving:

**MYTH:** Most car crashes are caused by car malfunctions such as faulty brakes, blown tires or engine problems.

**FACT:** As many as 90% of all crashes are caused by driver error or distraction. Vehicle problems represent a small portion of vehicle crashes. Most vehicle problems have to do with the condition or improper inflation of tires.

**Drivers using cell phones are four times as likely to be in a crash, due to their inability to respond or delayed response to hazards. Studies show drivers talking on cell phones can miss seeing up to 50 percent of the roadway signs, signals, pedestrians, and cyclists.**

**MYTH:** I have an "infotainment" system in my dashboard, so it's safe for me to talk or text because it is hands-free.

**FACT:** Voice texting features have been found by some research to be more distracting than typing because the voice-to-text features require drivers to look at dashboard screens to see the translated messages to be sure they are correct.

**Drivers also are also distracted because they're focused on talking and then fixing the message errors, resulting in slower reactions or completely missing hazards on the road.**

**MYTH:** I am a pro at multi-tasking. Driving and talking on the phone is like walking and chewing gum.

**FACT:** For tasks that are mentally challenging, the brain does not multi-task; it juggles the tasks.

**Human brains do not perform two tasks at the same time. Instead, the brain handles tasks sequentially, switching between one task and another. Brains can juggle tasks very rapidly, which leads us to erroneously believe we are doing two tasks at the same time. In reality, the brain is switching attention between tasks – performing only one task at a time.**

Resources: National Safety Council (NSC), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, US Department of Transportation



## AUTOMOTIVE SAFETY ASSOCIATION (ASA)

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## Driving risks of hands-free and handheld cell phones

**Slower Response Time and Reaction Time** – Response time includes both reaction time and movement time. Reaction time involves attentional resources and information processing, while movement time is a function of muscle activation. Cell phone use has been documented to affect reaction time.

Due to the “attention switching” it makes sense that driver reactions may be slower when using cell phones. When driving, fractions of seconds can be the time between a crash or no crash, injury or no injury, life or death.

Numerous studies show delayed response and reaction times when drivers are talking on hands-free and handheld cell phones. Reaction time has shown impairment in a variety of scenarios:

- ✓ Drivers talking on hands-free phones in simulated work zones took longer to reduce their speed when following a slowing vehicle before them and were more likely to brake hard than drivers not on the phone. Side-swipe crashes also were more common. Work zones are challenging environments for all drivers, and rear-end collisions are a leading type of work zone crash, putting workers and vehicle occupants at risk. Driver distraction is a significant contributing factor to work zone crashes.
- ✓ Hands-free phone use led to an increase in reaction time to braking vehicles in front of drivers, and reaction time increased more and crashes were more likely as the traffic density increased.
- ✓ Testing of rear-end collision warning systems showed significantly longer reaction time during complex hands-free phone conversations.

**Problems Staying in Lane** – “Lane keeping” or “tracking” is the driver’s ability to maintain the vehicle within a lane. While most cell phone driver performance problems involve significant reaction time impairment, there are minor, less significant costs with lane keeping. It is suggested that lane keeping may depend on different visual resources than responding to hazards by reacting. In addition, avoiding hazards requires drivers to watch for unexpected events, choose an appropriate response and act. This requires information processing and decision-making that is more cognitively demanding than lane keeping tasks, which is more automatic.

## CELL PHONE POLICIES:

Employers can and should design cell phone policies to follow best safety practice, reduce significant risks and minimize liability. Employers should implement cell phone policies which include:

- ✓ **Handheld and hands-free devices**
- ✓ **All employees**
- ✓ **All company vehicles**
- ✓ **All company cell phone devices**
- ✓ **All work-related communications – even in a personal vehicle or on a personal cell phone**

## EMPLOYERS NEED TO:

- ✓ **Educate employees**
- ✓ **Monitor compliance**
- ✓ **Enforce the policy**
- ✓ **Address violations**

**The BEST cell phone policies cover:**

**All employees**      **All handheld and hands-free devices**      **All work-related communications, even in personal vehicles or on personal cell phones**

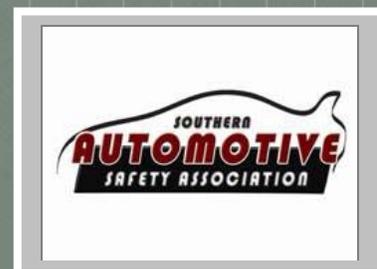
**All company vehicles**      **All company mobile phone devices**

**DRIVING DOWN DISTRACTION**

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## **CELL PHONE POLICY**

We deeply value the safety and well-being of all employees. Due to the increasing number of accidents resulting from the use of cell phones while driving, we are instituting a new policy.

1. Employees are not permitted to use a cell phone, either handheld or hands-free, while operating a motor vehicle on company business and/or on company time. This includes, but is not limited to test-driving customer's vehicles before, during and after repairs.
2. Employees are not permitted to read or respond to emails or text messages while operating a motor vehicle on company business and/or on company time.
3. This policy also applies to use of PDAs.
4. While driving, calls cannot be answered and must be directed to voice mail.
5. If an employee must make an emergency call (911), the vehicle should first be parked in a safe location.

Employees will be given two warnings. The third time an employee is found to be in violation of this policy, it is grounds for immediate dismissal.

Your signature below certifies your agreement to comply with this policy.

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Employee Signature

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Date