



DISTRACTED DRIVING

What is Distracted Driving?

Distracted driving is any non-driving activity a person engages in that has the potential to distract him or her from the primary task of driving and increase the risk of crashing.

There are three main types of distraction:

Visual — taking your eyes off the road

Manual — taking your hands off the wheel

Cognitive — taking your mind off what you're doing



Image courtesy of Florida Today, by Jeff Parker

While all distractions can endanger drivers' safety, texting is the most alarming because it involves all three types of distraction.

Distracting Activities

Using a cell phone

Eating and drinking

Talking to passengers

Grooming

Reading, including maps

Using a PDA or navigation system

Watching a video

Changing the radio station, CD, or Mp3 player.



Distracted Driving Crash Facts

In 2008, almost 20 percent of all crashes in the year involved some type of distraction. (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration - NHTSA).

Nearly 6,000 people died in 2008 in crashes involving a distracted driver, and more than half a million were injured. (NHTSA)

The younger, inexperienced drivers under 20 years old have the highest proportion of distraction-related fatal crashes.

Drivers who use hand-held devices are four times as likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves. (Source: Insurance Institute for Highway Safety)

Using a cell phone use while driving, whether it's hand-held or hands-free, delays a driver's reactions as much as having a blood alcohol concentration at the legal limit of .08 percent. (Source: University of Utah)



CELL PHONES ARE A DRIVING DISTRACTION



A driver's first responsibility is the safe operation of the vehicle.

If you are distracted by a phone conversation, you are putting yourself at risk of a collision, and possibly endangering others.

Distracted Driving Website: Distraction.gov

Cell Phones are a Driving Distraction

Alternatives:

- Turn off cell phone while driving
- Pull off to the side of the road to make important calls



CELL PHONES: ALTERNATIVES AND EXCEPTIONS

Hands Free Alternatives (better than texting, but can still be somewhat distracting)

- Bluetooth
- Voice-activated and speed dialing
- Push-to-Talk devices (radio)
- Voice mail and Caller ID answer caller until getting to safe destination



Image courtesy of Ryder Safety Solutions

Exceptions:

- Emergencies – calling law enforcement for assistance
- Reporting road hazards to the authorities
- Notifying the authorities of erratic driver

Note: Before using for emergency, determine if the call can be made safely.

Key Message: “It’s time to put it down”

Key message from National Highway & Traffic Safety Association (NHTSA)

IT’S TIME TO “PUT IT DOWN”

Drivers Simply Can't Do Two Things At Once

- Drivers who use hand-held devices while driving are four times as likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves or others.
- The proportion of drivers reportedly distracted at the time of the fatal crashes has increased from 8 percent in 2004 to 11 percent in 2008.
- One of the most commonly recognized distractions is cell phone use. Cell phone subscriptions have grown exponentially from 1988 through 2009. About 89 percent, or approximately 277 million of all Americans, have a cell phone, according to CTIA – The Wireless Association. For many, it is the only kind of telephone they possess. In

a recent NHTSA survey, most individuals (77 percent) reported that they talk on the phone while driving at least some of the time.

Everyone Has A Personal Responsibility

With more portable technology now than ever, driver distractions have risen to unprecedented numbers. We live in a world where people expect instant, real-time information 24 hours-a-day and those desires do not stop just because people get behind the wheel. Drivers simply do not realize the dangers that are posed when they take their eyes and minds off the road and their hands off the wheel and focus on activities other than driving.

Portable Electronic Equipment Policies



Although OSHA does not have any current regulations or policies on distracted driving, It is recommended that employers adopt a cell phone or portable electronic equipment policy to protect their workers.

Example policy verbiage (L & I employee policy):

“Use of portable electronic equipment, including, but not limited to, cell phones (including hands-free), text pagers, Blackberries and other PDAs, electronics, and laptop computers, is prohibited at any time while driving any vehicle on work business, except in an emergency situation where 911 is called.

Voice activated Global Positioning Units (GPS) are acceptable. However any input of these devices must be done prior to driving.

Supervisors will train employees on safe and acceptable alternatives to using electronic equipment while driving.”

Another Sample Company Policy (from NHTSA)

[Company Name] Texting and Talking on Hand-Held Cell Phones While Driving Policy

Of increasing concern to [Company Name] are the dangers of distracted driving. Recent deadly crashes involving drivers distracted by talking and texting while driving highlight a growing danger on our roads. Numerous studies have demonstrated how the use of hand-held cell phones while driving pose a significant safety risk to motorists, their passengers and others on the road. In fact, according the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), in 2008, nearly 6,000 people died in crashes involving a distracted driver.

Therefore, [Company Name] will no longer tolerate texting or talking on a hand-held phone while operating a company vehicle or while using a company issued cell phone while operating a personal vehicle. This includes, but is not limited to, answering or making phone calls, engaging in phone conversations, reading or responding to e-mails and text messages.

[Company Name] employees are required to:

- Turn cell phones off or put on silent or vibrate before starting the car.
- Pull over to a safe place if a call must be made or received while on the road.
- Consider modifying voice mail greeting to indicate that you are unavailable to answer calls or return messages while driving.
- Inform clients, associates and business partners of this policy as an explanation of why calls may not be returned immediately.

[Company Name] is concerned about the safety of its employees. It is our goal that if we lead by example, the practice of no texting or talking on hand-held cell phones while behind the wheel will spread throughout the community. Violations of this policy will lead to [Insert Company Consequences]

Below is a Statement of Acknowledgement that says you have read and fully understand [Company Name] policy. Please sign it and return it to your supervisor. If you have any questions regarding this policy please contact your supervisor.

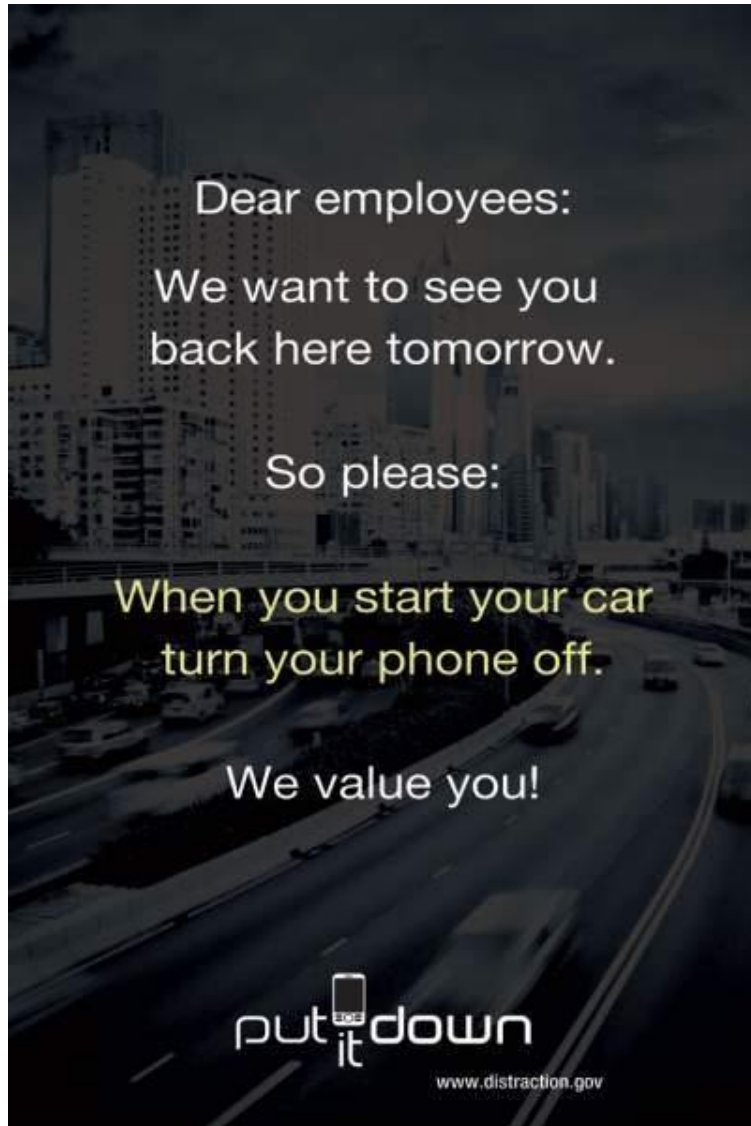
I have received a written copy of the Council's Motor Vehicle Safety policy. I fully understand the terms of this policy and agree to abide by them.

Employee Signature

Date

Employee Name (printed)

Examples of notices for employees



Dear employees:
We want to see you
back here tomorrow.

So please:

When you start your car
turn your phone off.

We value you!

put it down
www.distraction.gov



Stop using your phone
when you drive. We need
you back at work.

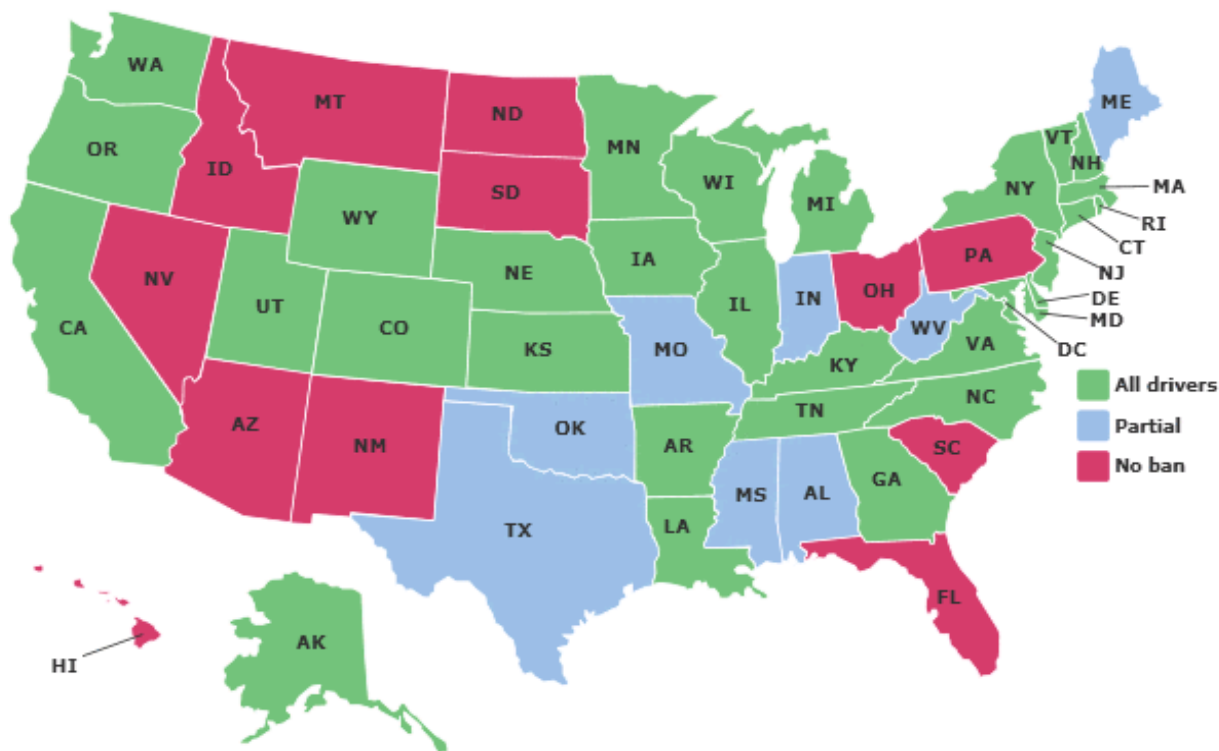
put it down
www.distraction.gov

Note: you can copy and paste these for handouts or safety notices

Further Information

Federal OSHA's Distracted Driving Initiative

President Obama's Executive Order on text messaging while driving



Map of state by state texting ban (as of November, 2010)