

The most dangerous part of the day for any employee is the time they spend in their vehicle. With a crash occurring every 5 seconds, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of occupational fatalities in the U.S.

In 2000, the economic cost of crashes to employers was \$60 billion resulting in 3 million lost workdays. The average on-the-job crash costs an employer about \$16,500. Crashes involving injuries cost substantially more -- \$504,408 for a fatal injury and \$73,750 for a nonfatal injury.

A strong driver safety program can protect an organization's human and financial resources. It allows an organization to be proactive in controlling crash risks and is the first line of defense against the staggering costs from motor vehicle crashes involving employees.

A study by the University of Utah found that drivers using cell phones had **slower reaction times** than drivers with a .08 blood alcohol content, the legal intoxication limit.

Whether handheld or hands-free, cell phone conversations while driving are risky since the distraction to the brain remains. Drivers on cell phones can miss up to 50% of their driving environments, including pedestrians and red lights. They look but they don't see, a phenomenon known as *inattention blindness*.

Contrary to popular belief, the human brain cannot multitask. Instead, it switches between two cognitive activities.



Could your company be liable?

OSHA states that, "As a business owner or manager, it's your legal responsibility under the Occupational Safety and Health Act to safeguard drivers at work.

Implementing enforced total cell phone ban policies can help protect employees from crashes and injury, as well as help protect employers from liability. An employer may be held legally accountable for negligent employee actions if the employee was acting within the scope of his or her employment at the time of a crash.

Banning the use of cell phones while driving is a risk reduction effort. **Employers have an obligation to protect their employees and others with whom they share the roads.** The best action for employers is to implement a total ban policy that includes handheld and hands-free devices and prohibits all employees from using cell phones while driving. This policy should be reinforced throughout the year with education.

Will a cell phone policy affect productivity?

With the cell phone's origin as a corporate productivity tool, it's understandable that there is concern that prohibiting its use while driving could affect productivity. However, most employers that have passed total ban cell phone policies report that the policies do not adversely impact productivity, and some even report that productivity improves after a ban is implemented.

The Governor's Traffic Safety Bureau is part of the Iowa Department of Public Safety. The Bureau's mission is to reduce traffic injuries and deaths on Iowa's roadways. One key area that must be addressed is distracted driving. We cannot put an end to distracted driving by ourselves. It will take a concerted effort by many entities and by every individual that gets behind the wheel.

As a business owner or manager, we know your concern is for the safety of your employees and we want to assist you in your effort to keep them safe. To this end, our office has developed an **Employee Safe Driver Program**. We can provide you with a guide that includes materials and resources to help you implement your own Employee Safe Driver Program.

**PLEASE
REMEMBER
THAT**

**ONE TEXT OR CALL COULD
WRECK
IT ALL**

Our guide includes:

- Fact sheets that demonstrate the dangers of cell phone use while driving and information on additional employer liability.
- Tips for managing some of the most common driver distractions.
- Information on why cell phone use is one of the most dangerous behaviors for drivers.
- OSHA's information brochure on why employers need to implement and enforce cell phone bans.
- The National Safety Council's "Employer Liability and the Case for Comprehensive Cell Phone Policies."
- How employers can enhance their cell phone policy adherence.
- Sample pledge cards and posters.
- Numerous **sample cell phone policies**.

A message from the Governor of Iowa:

"I want to join the Department of Public Safety in encouraging you to commit to make Iowa a better and safer place to call home. The Employee Distracted Driving Program detailed in this brochure certainly supports one of my most important goals, the Healthiest State Initiative. Working together we can make a difference!"

-- Governor Terry E. Branstad

Zero[®] Fatalities

A Goal We Can All Live With

The Iowa Governor's Traffic Safety Bureau Employee Safe Driver Program guide can be obtained by contacting our office.

The Employee Safe Driver Program guide is provided at no charge and our staff is always available to assist should you have any questions in regard to any of the information found in the guide.

You may contact the Iowa Governor's Traffic Safety Bureau at 515-725-6123 or via email at gtsbinfo@dps.state.ia.us. The Bureau's mailing address is 215 East 7th Street, Des Moines, IA 50319.

Our Distracted Driving Coordinator can be reached at 515-725-6127 or via email at parsons@dps.state.ia.us.

*Thank You for Helping
To Make Iowa a Safe
Place to Work and Live*



produced with federal highway safety funds



Employee Safe Driver Program

**A Program Developed
for Iowa Employers
by the
Iowa Governor's
Traffic Safety Bureau**

