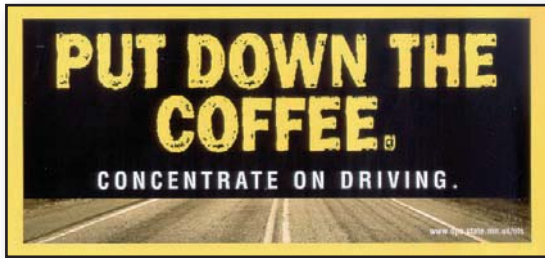


Distracted Driving: New Tools for Employers



Concern about distracted driving continues to grow at the state and

national level. According to the National Safety Council, distraction is involved in 80 percent of crashes and 65 percent of near-crashes. Beyond concern for the safety of employees, crashes are also costly to employers. An on-the-job crash costs an employer more than \$24,000, rising to more than \$125,000 if the crash involves injury (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration). All employers face ongoing liability, insurance, productivity and absenteeism costs.

To help you deal with this issue, Minnesota NETS has coordinated a comprehensive online resource for employers, including a kit developed by the National Safety Council (NSC), with communications tools for management and employees. You'll find presentations, posters, fact sheets, sample policies and more at www.minnesotasafetycouncil.org/traffic/distracteddriving.

The following tips from NSC provide a template for building employee support for a cell phone policy, or a broader distracted driving policy:

- Don't spring a policy on employees as a surprise. Before policy implementation, hold open meetings with employees to discuss the need for it. Request feedback from employees (anonymously, if that's helpful).
- When unions are involved, the union steward is a key stakeholder. Hold a pre-meeting with union reps to get them on board.
- Recognize that, for some employees, this policy will change deeply ingrained habits. Give employees the opportunity to discuss potential barriers, conflicts, and doubts. Ask employees to offer solutions to other employees' objections.

- Employees must see and hear that top management supports the policy.
- Employees may be concerned about job productivity – especially staff who frequently drive on the job and the supervisors responsible for their performance. Invite discussion about these concerns.
- Invite cross-department employee teams to solve barriers to implementation. Have teams share the solutions with all employees. While working together, they build and reinforce the social support for a policy.
- Have a mix of senior management, front-line supervisors, union representatives and other employees serve as spokespeople for the new policy process.
- Tell compelling, vivid stories and testimonials about the risk of crashes. Because many people still incorrectly believe that hands-free phones are safer, it's useful to share stories about hands-free phone crashes.
- Involve employees in deciding how to monitor compliance and consequences of non-compliance.

In a 2009 membership survey, 99 percent of NSC member respondents with cell phone policies found no decrease in productivity.

- After policy implementation, communicate positive results to employees. Consider surveying impact on productivity, and share the results. The results are likely to be more positive than people expect. In a 2009 membership survey, 99 percent of NSC member respondents with cell phone policies found no decrease in productivity.

Source: National Safety Council Cell Phone Policy Kit

NOTE: The information on the next page can be copied and posted or distributed to your employees.

Focus on Your Driving



Are You a Distracted Driver?

When driving, do you ever...

- eat, drink or smoke?
- talk on the cell phone?
- send or read text messages?
- argue with another passenger?
- break up fights between your kids?

Distraction can be:

Visual – taking your eyes off the road

Manual – taking your hands off the wheel

Mental – taking your mind off what you're doing

What can you do to manage your distractions?

- Preset climate control, radio and CD player.
- Stay focused – eyes on the road, hands on the wheel.
- Don't drive when angry, upset or sleepy.
- Turn off your cell phone. If you need to use it, pull off the road.
- Don't text and drive – it's illegal . . . and can be deadly.

What's the average number of decisions a driver makes during each mile of driving?

a. 20 b. 75 c. 200

Answer: c. 200! You're already multi-tasking to the max.



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