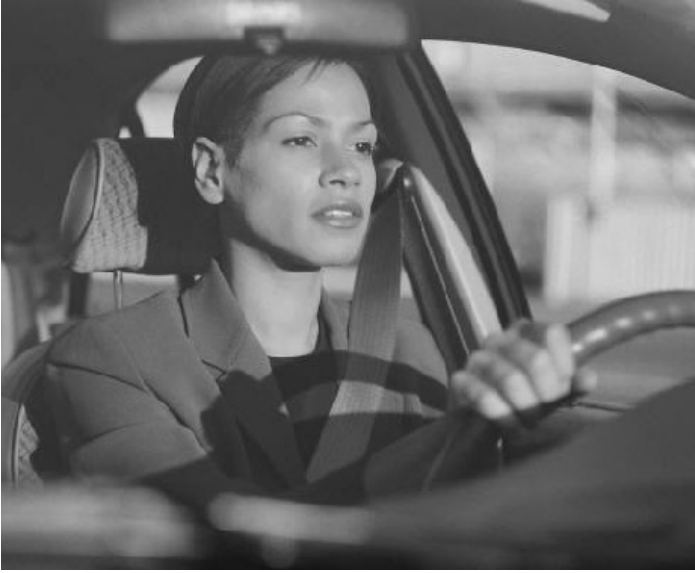


HAZARD ALERT: Distracted Driving



The Issue

Each year, traffic-related crashes claim the lives of more workers, both statewide and nationally, than any other single cause. While it is unknown if driver distraction contributed to these incidents, there is no doubt this type of activity endangers the safety of everyone on the roadway. In 2009, the **U.S. Department of Transportation** reported more than 5,400 deaths linked to driver distraction. Thousands of more were injured.

Distracted driving is a growing epidemic that contributes to an alarming number of fatalities.

This **Hazard Alert** is intended to heighten awareness of this often overlooked occupational hazard and provide employers with guidance to protect their employees. The document should serve as a convenient tool for employers. It should be expanded and tailored to individual companies, places of business or worksite. This document does not alter or determine compliance responsibilities set forth in the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970.

What is Distracted Driving?

Distracted driving is any non-driving activity with the potential to distract a motorist. Driving while distracted is an unsafe and irresponsible action that has life-threatening consequences.

Although employers cannot control roadway conditions, they can promote safe driving behavior by providing safety information to workers and enforcing driver safety policies. Crashes related to driver distraction are not an unavoidable part of doing business.

What Can Employers Do?

Developing a culture of workplace safety and health excellence requires that employers design clear, explicit policies to be coupled with sound practices.

Employers and Employees Should:

- Develop a motor vehicle safety policy.** It is necessary to establish work procedures and rules that do not require, nor make it necessary for workers engage in activities that promote driving while distracted. Distracted driving activities include grooming, eating, talking with passengers, reading and GPS units, etc.

- Discourage the use of cell phones while driving.** If cell phones must be used, employees should be instructed to pull over to the side of the roadside, into a rest stop or parking lot and stop the vehicle.

- Prohibit texting while driving.** The Indiana Department of Labor encourages employers to declare vehicles “text-free zones.” As of July 1, 2011, texting and e-mailing (reading or responding) while driving is against the law. Violators may face up to a \$500 fine.

- Create procedures, times and places** for drivers’ safe use technologies for communicating with managers, customers and others.

- Do not impose unreasonable time constraints or deadlines** on employees who deliver goods and services to clients.

- Do not require** employees to attend meetings via teleconference while driving.

- Walk the talk—be a role model.** Ensure that management and supervisors follow the same safety policies and procedures that employees are expected to follow.

Additional Assistance

INSafe, the Indiana Department of Labor’s OSHA consultation program, provides employers with free onsite consultation, outreach, training and education. INSafe’s resources are designed to assist employers to further *advance the safety, health and prosperity of Hoosiers in the workplace.*

INSafe Safety and Health Consultants can help employers by:

- Reducing occupational injury and illness rates** by identifying and correcting occupational safety and health hazards.

- Providing advice and technical assistance** for compliance with occupational safety and health standards.

- Working with employers and employees** to develop and implement effective safety and health management systems.

For more information about INSafe, visit www.in.gov/dol/in-safe, email insafe@dol.in.gov or phone (317) 232-2688. To submit a request for INSafe onsite consultation, please visit www.in.gov/dol/insafeconsultation.