Distracted Driving (Cellphone Use) Meeting Kit



Distracted Driving (Cellphone Use) Safety Talk

Using cellphones or other devices while driving has proven to be deadly. Cellphone use during driving is very prevalent on our roads today. In fact, at any given time throughout the day, approximately 660,000 drivers are attempting to use their phones while behind the wheel of an automobile.

SAFETY RISKS

Smartphones have made it easy for us to stay connected at all times. But that can pose serious safety risks if someone decides to check his or her text messages, emails, phone calls, or any other mobile applications while driving.

Driving requires us to **See, Hear, Do,** and **Think.** Using a cell phone to text or carry on a conversation requires you to use all four skills – See, Hear, Do and Think.

Cell phone usage ranks at the top of the list for distracting behaviors that increase your chances of being involved in a crash or near crash event.

1. Text messaging (or texting) on a cell phone – 23 times more likely
2. Talking on a cell phone – 4 to 5 times more likely
3. Reading – 3 times more likely
4. Applying makeup – 3 times more likely
5. Reaching for a moving object – 9 times more likely
6. Dialing on a hand-held device – 3 times more likely
7. Talking or listening on a hand-held device – 1.3 times more likely

MITIGATION ACTION FOR DISTRACTED DRIVING

Workers must take the following actions to stay focused behind the wheel.

- Don’t use a cell phone if you are a new driver or are getting accustomed to a new car.
- Pull over to the side of the road to take or make calls, including calls to 9-1-1.
- Familiarize yourself with any motor vehicle laws pertaining to cell phones.
- Limit phone use to when you are parked or ask a passenger to make calls for you.
- Use a hands-free headset and keep calls brief.
- Don’t take notes or look up phone numbers while driving.

- Get to know your phone and its features so you know where the buttons are.
- Keep your phone within easy reach so you don’t have to take your eyes off the road.
- Don’t make or take calls during heavy traffic or severe weather.
- Never have stressful or emotional conversations while driving.
- Keep conversations brief. Let the person know you are driving and must hang up as soon as possible
- Do not use your phone while driving.
- Make necessary adjustments (e.g., adjust controls, program directions) to your car before your drive.
- Do not reach to pick up items from the floor, open the glove box, or try to catch falling objects in the vehicle.
- Avoid emotional conversations with passengers, or pull over in a safe location to continue the conversation. For normal conversation, passengers in the vehicle can often help lower crash risk for adult drivers.
- Focus on the driving environment – the vehicles around you, pedestrians, cyclists, and objects or events that may mean you need to act quickly to control or stop your vehicle.

Employers: Use the following recommendations to prevent distracted driving.

- Ban all phone use while driving a company vehicle, and apply the same rules to use of a company-issued phone while driving a personal vehicle.
- Require workers to pull over in a safe location if they must text, make a call, or look up directions.
- Prepare workers before implementing these policies by communicating:
- How distracted driving puts them at risk of a crash
- That driving requires their full attention while they are on the road
- What they need to do to comply with your company’s policies
- What action you will take if they do not follow these policies
- Consider having workers acknowledge that they have read and understand these policies.
- Provide workers with information to help them talk to their family about distracted driving.

FINAL WORD

Safe driving requires undivided attention. Keep your eyes and your mind on the road. Driving and multitasking can never safely coexist. If you need to make or take a phone call, check driving directions or select some different music, pull over into a safe place. Two minutes of inconvenience seems like a more than fair trade for a few extra years or decades of life.