

THE COMMUNIQUE

Cell Phones Texting and Driving

With ever increasing demands on our personal and professional time in today's busy society, learning to juggle multiple tasks at once is something we all face daily. We will all agree that cell phones have gotten pretty handy in this modern age; we agree that they are important to keep touch between drivers and employers. They can make a difference if you are ever in an accident on the road not only to be able to call someone for help but if able then to take pictures for documenting the accident. Your company will have a detailed policy on cellular activity.

These are a few things to keep in mind as you head out on the road everyday:



Two states, Oklahoma and Texas, restrict school bus drivers from texting. 14 states and territories prohibit drivers of all ages from using hand-held cell phones while driving. Forty-five states ban text messaging for drivers of all ages.

FMCSA has published new rules that restrict texting and the use of hand-held mobile phones by truck and bus drivers while operating a commercial motor vehicle (CMV). Research commissioned by FMCSA shows the odds of being involved in a safety-critical event are 23.2 times greater for CMV drivers who text while driving than for those who do not. Texting drivers took their eyes off the forward roadway for an average of 4.6 seconds. At 55mph this equates to a driver traveling 371 feet, or the approximate length of a football field (including end zones).

Texting means manually entering text or reading text from an electronic device. It includes, but is not limited to, short message services, e-mailing, instant messaging, a command or request to access a Web page, pressing more than a single button to initiate or terminate a call using a mobile telephone, or engaging in any other form of electronic text retrieval or entry.

Texting while driving can result in penalties can be up to \$2,750 for drivers and up to \$11,000 for employers who allow or require drivers to use a hand-held communication device for texting while driving. Violations negatively impact SMS results. Multiple convictions can result in a driver disqualification by FMCSA.

Based on fatal accident reports, NHTSA data shows that at least 3,154 people were killed in crashes involving all distracted drivers in 2013, including those who were texting and driving. NHTSA estimates that 424,000 Americans were injured in all distraction-affected crashes in 2013.

A few questions that we could all ask ourselves when our cell phones ring or buzz.

Can it wait? Can I afford the consequences? Is it worth someone's life?

