

RISK INSIGHTS

10 Strategies to Address Distracted Driving



Distracted driving is a safety risk that can lead to vehicle accidents, injuries and even fatalities. Employers have a responsibility to encourage safe driving habits among their employees, especially those who operate company vehicles or drive for work-related tasks.

This article provides 10 strategies for employers to address distracted driving among their employees.

1. Establish a Formal Distracted Driving Policy

A comprehensive distracted driving policy should prohibit the use of handheld devices, eating, grooming, and any other activities that divert attention from driving. It should outline permissible driving activities, approved technology use, strategies to minimize distractions, guidelines for making hands-free phone calls, the procedures for reporting violations and emergency protocols, and measures to address driver fatigue. Employers should clearly communicate company expectations and mandatory employee adherence to the policy. Additionally, employees should receive training on the distracted driving policy and procedures. Having a strong distracted driving policy that leadership takes seriously helps promote compliance with the policy and emphasizes leadership backing.

2. Provide Education and Training

Regular training sessions and workshops on the dangers of distracted driving can help reinforce safe driving habits. Employees should be educated about the risks of multitasking behind the wheel, and real-world examples should be used to show the consequences of distracted driving.

3. Limit Cellphone Use While Driving

A no-texting or hands-free calling rule while driving is beneficial, as it complies with most state laws. Employers should identify employee cellphone use that is acceptable. If employees must communicate while on the road, they should be required to use hands-free devices or, preferably, pull over to a safe location before making or answering calls or texting.

4. Utilize Technology

Leveraging technology to help employees stay focused while driving can help with distracted driving. Mobile apps and in-vehicle technology can block incoming calls and messages while the vehicle is in motion, preventing unnecessary distractions. In-cab camera use can provide alerts to employees if they are distracted or drowsy while driving, helping to prevent accidents. Moreover, monitoring employees' compliance with distracted driving policies can be done through periodic check-ins, vehicle tracking systems and safety reports. If employees know they are being monitored, compliance will likely improve.

5. Build a Strong Safety Culture

Building a workplace culture that prioritizes safety is essential. Employers should emphasize that meeting deadlines or answering calls should never take precedence over safe driving. Recognizing and rewarding employees who demonstrate safe driving behaviors can further reinforce this culture. Furthermore, leadership should show their commitment to this policy. When leaders show support, it improves employee buy-in.

6. Enforce Policy Compliance

Employers must make sure repercussions and penalties for repeated or severe policy violations are defined. Clear documentation of these consequences helps ensure transparency and allows employees to understand the expectations and potential outcomes of their actions. Establishing a structured disciplinary process fosters accountability and reinforces a culture of professionalism within the workplace. Furthermore, consistent enforcement across all employees is essential for fairness and to prevent bias.

7. Offer Safe Driving Incentives

Recognizing and rewarding employees who consistently follow safe driving practices can help with motivation. Providing bonuses or gifts for those who are driving safely can create awareness among employees and create an incentive to reduce distracted driving.

8. Perform Accident Investigations

Accident investigations can help identify high-risk behaviors and prevent future accidents from occurring. Employers can analyze patterns and contributing factors to determine the root cause of an accident. Once a trend, pattern or root cause is identified, employers can then refine policies, enhance training and introduce preventive strategies to improve overall road safety.

9. Require Taking Breaks

Employees who are driving while fatigued can contribute to distracted driving. Drowsy employees are more likely to lose focus on the road and react slowly. Employers should implement policies that require employees to take scheduled breaks during long trips to stay alert and refreshed.

10. Limit Passengers

Limiting passengers in a company vehicle helps prevent distracted driving by reducing conversations, noise and other in-car distractions that can take a driver's focus off the road. Fewer passengers also minimize unnecessary movements, such as reaching for items or adjusting controls, which can lead to dangerous lapses in attention. Additionally, limiting the number of passengers helps maintain a calmer driving environment, allowing the driver to stay fully focused on safe navigation and decision-making, ultimately reducing the risk of accidents. This ensures that employees stay focused on driving safely, ultimately reducing the risk of accidents and improving overall workplace safety. Passengers should be limited to those who are necessary to be in the vehicle.

Summary

By utilizing these strategies, employers can significantly reduce distracted driving among employees and create a safer work environment. For additional distracted driving resources, contact us today.

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