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Nevada OSHA Encourages Employers to Ban Texting While Driving

Las Vegas – We've all seen it. You're driving along in your car when you notice another car weaving back and forth in the lane next you. You glance over and discover that the driver is tapping out a text message with eyes glued to the phone, instead of the road in front of them.

Texting while driving is one of the most dangerous forms of distracted driving. That's why the Nevada Occupational Health & Safety Section (OSHA) of the Division of Industrial Relations is encouraging employers to protect employees on the road for work by banning texting while driving.

In Nevada, in 2010, 181 collisions and 232 incidences of property damage occurred because of distractions due to the use of cell phones, including telephone calls and texting, and electronic equipment. Three people died in 2010 as a result of cell phone usage while driving.

New communications technologies can help businesses work smarter and faster, but that's not a good reason to risk injury and death by texting while driving. The statistics will only get worse unless we do something about it.

Employers are pivotal to the effort to keep the roadways safe from distracted driving because of their legal obligations under the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSH Act) to protect workers' safety. Nevada OSHA is reaching out to employers statewide to remind them that their obligation applies to all employees, including those who do work behind the wheel, regardless of whether they work full-time or intermittently.

Companies are in violation of the OSH Act if, by policy or practice, they require texting while driving, create incentives that encourage or condone it, or structure work such that texting is practical necessity for workers to do their jobs. Nevada OSHA is asking employers to declare their vehicles "text free zones". Nevada OSHA is also asking employers to provide worker education and policies that explicitly ban texting while driving.

Nevada OSHA strongly encourages workers to let the agency know if their employer is requiring them to ext while behind the wheel, whether by policy or practice. When Nevada OSHA receives a credible complaint that these types of violations are happening, the agency will investigate and, when warranted, issue citations and penalties.

The Department of Transportation (DOT) provides extensive information on their webpage distraction.gov. Federal OSHA has created their own [distracted driving webpage](#) that explains employers' roles in addressing this life-threatening behavior. Also on the webpage is a [Distracted Driving: No Texting](#) brochure which explains the importance of never requiring employees to text.

It will take a strong, combined effort to stop texting while driving, but employers and employees, working with Nevada OSHA, can fight this hazard and keep the roadways safe for all drivers.

To learn more about Nevada OSHA, go to <http://dirweb.state.nv.us/OSHA/osha.htm>.

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