

Do Cellular Phones Cause Accidents

This safety talk is designed for discussion leaders to use in preparing safety meetings. Set a specific time and date for your safety meeting. Publicize your meeting so everyone involved will be sure to attend.

Review this safety talk before the meeting and become familiar with its content. Make notes about the points made in this talk that pertain to your workplace. You should be able to present the material in your own words and lead the discussion without reading it. Collect whatever materials and props you will need ahead of time. Try to use equipment in your workplace to demonstrate your points.

BEGINNING THE MEETING

Give the safety talk in your own words. Use the printed talk merely as a guide. The purpose of a safety meeting is to initiate discussion of safety problems and provide solutions to those problems. Encourage employees to discuss hazards or potential hazards they encounter on the job. Ask them to suggest ways to improve safety in their area.

Don't let the meeting turn into a gripe session about unrelated topics. As discussion leader, it's your job to make sure the topic is safety. Discussing other topics wastes time and can ruin the effectiveness of your safety meeting. At the end of the meeting, ask employees to sign a sheet on the back of this talk as a record that they attended the safety meeting. Keep this talk on file for your records.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

It's common knowledge that the number one cause of work-related fatalities is vehicle accidents. Most companies have at least one truck, if not a whole fleet of vehicles, and their drivers face the hazards of the roadway day after day. Sometimes a trip ends tragically.

Now, a new technology threatens to increase the accident potential for drivers. In more and more companies, cellular phones are being used by construction, service and delivery personnel, as well as by management levels. According to one research study, the use of a cellular phone while driving increases the risk of having an accident four-fold. Another study found that having a cellular phone in a vehicle increased the risk of being involved in an accident by 34 %. The U.S. Department of Transportation reports an increase in the number of complaints about drivers talking on their cellular phones while operating a vehicle. Critics of these studies argue that the research is poor and does not make a decisive

connection. Besides, having a cellular telephone in the car can be an advantage when used to call emergency services. What do you think?

Reported Hazards Associated With Cellular Phones:

1. Users are said to be distracted from defensive driving practices, and less responsive to highway traffic situations. When they do react, their response time is said to be longer.
2. People on the phone are more likely to have intense conversations that involve problem-solving--which is more distracting than shooting the breeze with a passenger.
3. Passengers in the car often alert drivers to dangerous situation, and stop talking at such times, in contrast to someone on the other end of the line who is unaware of the traffic situation.
4. Cell phone users may be concentrating on dialing a number or handling the equipment and fail to notice a stop light, traffic sign, or a vehicle in front of them.
5. Not only the driver on the phone, but other drivers on the roadway are at increased risk if a cell phone user is the ultimate cause of an accident.

Safety Reminders For Cell Phone Users:

1. Keep conversations short and sweet. Develop ways to get free of long-winded friends and associates while on the road. Don't use the cell phone for social visiting.
2. Hang up in tricky traffic situations--without warning if necessary. Safe driving takes precedence over telephone etiquette. You can explain later--because you'll still be alive!
3. Resist dialing a number while on the move in heavy traffic whenever possible; wait until you are at a traffic light or stop sign.
4. Keep even more distance between you and the car ahead of you than normally recommended.
5. Consider using a 'hands-free' speakerphone system, so you can keep your hands on the wheel and your eyes on the road-- and still keep talking. These speakerphones are available for many popular telephone models. Some states have proposed legislation that requires use of these devices.

All drivers are at risk of having a vehicle accident before, during or after work, and the use of a cell phone may increase this risk. Concentrate on the above reminders! Don't become a statistic!

GENERAL SAFETY REVIEW

This is a time to review all safety concerns, not just today's topic. Keep your notes on this page before, during and after the safety meeting.

Are you aware of any safety hazards from any other crews? Point out any hazards other crews are creating that this crew should know about. Tell the crew what you intend to do about those hazards.

Do we have any other safety business? Discuss any past issues or problems. Report any progress of investigations and action taken.

Have there been any accidents, near misses or complaints? Discuss any accidents, near misses, and complaints that have happened since the last safety meeting. Also recognize the safety contributions made by members of the crew.

Please remember, we want to hear from you about any health and safety issues that come up. If we don't know about problems, we can't take action to fix them.

ENDING THE MEETING

Circulate Sign-Off Form.

Assign one or more crew member(s) to help with next safety meeting.

Refer action items for follow-up.

Do you have any Safety Recommendations?

Do you have any Job Specific Topics you would like us to discuss?

Comments:
