

## Pay Attention and Drive!

### April Is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month

Driving is a risky activity. Each year, more than 30,000 people are killed in motor vehicle crashes and more than 3 million people are injured. It's the leading cause of work-related death and, even when occurring off the job can have a significant impact on the workplace. These crashes pose a major risk to employers of all sizes and ultimately can affect a company's bottom line.

Some facts about distracted driving:

- In 2009, 5,474 people were killed on U.S. roadways and an estimated additional 448,000 were injured in motor vehicle crashes that were reported to have involved distracted driving. (U.S. DOT)
- The age group with the greatest proportion of distracted drivers was the under-20 age group – 16 percent of all drivers younger than 20 involved in fatal crashes were reported to have been distracted while driving. (NHTSA)
- Drivers who use hand-held devices are four times as likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves. (Insurance Institute for Highway Safety)
- Using a cell phone use while driving, whether it's hand-held or hands-free, delays a driver's reactions as much as having a blood alcohol concentration at the legal limit of .08 percent. (University of Utah)

To support employee awareness, Minnesota NETS has compiled comprehensive online resource for employers, including a kit developed by the National Safety Council, with communications tools for management and employees. You'll find presentations, posters, fact sheets, sample policies and more at [www.minnesotasafetycouncil.org/traffic/distracteddriving](http://www.minnesotasafetycouncil.org/traffic/distracteddriving). Use these resources in conjunction with Distracted Driving Enforcement Day in Minnesota, April 21, 2011, and throughout the year.

## How's Minnesota Doing?

- At least 408 people were killed on Minnesota roads in 2010, according to preliminary records from the Department of Public Safety (DPS). DPS projects the final 2010 count to close around the 420 mark — on par with 2009's total of 421, the lowest number of annual deaths since 1944.
- Motorcyclist deaths plummeted again — 41 rider deaths compared to 53 total deaths in 2009. This marks the second consecutive major decline in rider deaths (deaths in 2009 dropped 28 percent from 2008).
- Each year, alcohol-related crashes account for more than one-third of the state's total death count. Last year there were 141 alcohol-related deaths, the lowest death count on record since being tracked in 1984.
- Daytime seat belt compliance hit a record-high 92 percent



## Coming up: "Click It or Ticket," May 23 – June 5

Summer is the deadliest time on our roads. Law enforcement agencies around the state are gearing up for a seat belt enforcement campaign, May 23 – June 5. Start your planning efforts today by using resources found at the Minnesota NETS website or contact Minnesota NETS Coordinator Lisa Kons at 651-228-7330/800-444-9150; [lisa.kons@minnesotasafetycouncil.org](mailto:lisa.kons@minnesotasafetycouncil.org).

NOTE: The information on the next page can be copied and posted or distributed to your employees.

From the Minnesota Network of Employers for Traffic Safety

## “Multi-tasking? No Problem!”



**Your brain is already working to the max!**

- Drivers make an average of 200 decisions during each mile behind the wheel!
- Drivers who use hand-held devices are four times as likely to get into crashes serious enough to cause injury.

Actually, anything that takes your eyes off the road, your hands off the wheel or your mind off your driving can be a big problem. In fact, studies prove that your brain cannot give full attention to more than one thing at a time.

Typical distractions:

- Adjusting the radio, CD player, iPod, GPS system.
- Eating, reading a map, watching a movie (yes, it really happens!), shaving, putting on makeup.
- Driving an unfamiliar vehicle or route.
- Interacting with other passengers, especially children.
- Using a cell phone – sorry, that includes hands-free! – or texting.

## “What can I do?”

Manage the distractions:

- Before you go, plan your route (and comb your hair, brush your teeth, pluck your eyebrows, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera).
- Preset climate control, radio and music players. Adjust your mirrors. Know where to find the wipers, lights and signals.
- Postpone emotional or complex conversations.
- Turn off your cell phone.
- Put away newspapers, reports, planners and other distracting materials.
- Don't call if you know someone is driving – and don't answer the phone if you're behind the wheel.
- Make sure everyone is buckled in.

Be a good role model. Kids are watching and learning from you!



## The ultimate distraction

Texting while driving takes your mind, eyes and hands away from the task of driving.

If you text while driving, on average, you take your eyes off the road for up to 4.6 out of every six seconds. That's like travelling the length of a football field at 55 mph without looking up!

Texting is simply one of the most dangerous things you can do while driving – and it's illegal for all ages in Minnesota.

