



*We're about service, commitment, results, and accountability!*

*Our Weekly Safety Tip provides valuable and current safety information relevant for Work, Home & Play.*

*And, you will be kept current on the latest Safety Compliance issues.*



**SCI SAFETY NEWS OR TIP**



**SCI OSHA NEWS OR COMPLIANCE**



**SCI HEALTHYLIVING and WELLNESS NEWS**

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**Safety Slogan**

**Put your brakes on speed**

**James Lehrke-SCI**

**of the week**

## SCI Safety Tip: Hang Up the Cell Phone and Drive!

Sources: <http://www.blr.com>

Date: January 25, 2012

In a move that surprised many, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) recently urged states to ban all drivers from using cellular technology—including hands-free and Bluetooth sets. The board can neither pass such a law nor compel states to do so. But it raises a big question: How could employers communicate with mobile workers with no cell phones?

**Employers can be liable.** We spoke with Matt Howard, CEO of ZoomSafer, which provides technology intended to promote safe driving. Howard reports that 38 states regulate drivers' use of wireless communication, but most ban only texting while driving. A few states, including Connecticut and California, require drivers to use only hands-free devices. And the federal Department of Transportation issued a rule effective January 3, 2012, that drivers of commercial motor vehicles may not use hand-held mobile phones. They may answer, place, or end a call if they can do so by pushing a single button or using, but not holding, a device within their reach. And the rule has teeth. Howard reports that a driver who violates it can be subject to a fine of \$2,700.

**His most urgent message to employers:** If a “distracted driver”—the catch phrase for someone who texts or talks on the phone at the wheel—is driving a company-owned vehicle on business and causes an accident that injures or kills someone else, the employer can be found vicariously liable. And, judges are not looking kindly on employees who are reckless because they're distracted. In one recent case, a train engineer was texting his girlfriend and missed warning signals and lights visible from as much as 450 feet away. Result? He plowed into a train stopped ahead of him, derailling many cars on both trains and injuring scores of people. And Howard talks about a scary case in which he was involved. A recently hired commercial van driver in Ohio was texting while driving, drove over the median, and killed a 19-year-old college student. In court, the judge asked whether the employer had conducted a background check and a motor vehicle records review on the driver. The answer was yes to both. Had it checked his cell phone records? No. Those records would have shown that the driver routinely sent 5,000 texts each month. The employer paid hugely for the accident.

**Hands-free doesn't solve the problem.** A 2009 study by researchers at the University of Utah reported that “equivalent deficits in driving performance were obtained for users of both hand-held and hands-free cell phones.” Connecticut passed its hands-free law in 2005. But the state had the largest percentage increase in traffic fatalities in the nation between 2009 and 2010, while fatalities nationwide dropped to their lowest number

in six decades. And cell phone violations—only for drivers using hand-held sets—skyrocketed to more than 10,000 in 2010.

Comments Howard, “Fear and greed, unfortunately, drive most of our behavior. Laws won’t do it. Picking up the phone when it beeps or boops is a Pavlovian response.” With 6 million people driving employer-provided vehicles equipped with employer-provided smartphones, “The amount of potential liability is huge.” And if the employee is driving a personal vehicle and using a personal cell phone? If his boss texts or calls him about an upcoming sales meeting, and the employee crashes while answering, the employer can be liable for any damage or injuries.

**What can employers do?** ZoomSafer and several other companies, including Cellcontrol, make and sell devices that can be installed in company vehicles to block all cell signals except calls to 911. The software senses when a vehicle is moving and begins blocking signals. It is sensitive enough to detect speeds of more than 0 miles per hour, but employers can, if they wish, set them to block only at higher speeds. “Different employers have different levels of tolerance for risk,” says Howard, “ranging from 0 percent all the way up to 100 percent, so they can vary their settings accordingly.” Settings could also be varied according to whether an individual driver’s route is in a busy or densely populated area, as opposed to a more rural one. Note that similar devices designed for consumers that can block the cell signals of other mobile phone users are illegal, according to the Federal Communications Commission. ZoomSafer’s technology blocks signals only to and from the cell phone in the commercial vehicle where it’s installed. Consumers can buy and have installed similar devices for personal cars, such as the vehicle that a newly licensed teenager will be driving.

**Will states adopt NTSB’s recommendation?** Howard believes that’s highly unlikely in the near future, although he does acknowledge that the federal government’s positions on seat belt use, blood alcohol levels, and speed limits have been widely influential. He believes that the current trend at both state and federal levels is to promote hands-free rules; there are currently two bills in Congress to that effect. And, he says, even adopting NTSB’s rule won’t solve the problem. “Laws and regulations are easy, but they don’t change behavior. Technology does change behavior.” For more information, see <http://ZoomSafer.com>.

## OSHA Compliance: Safe Driving Practices for Employees

Source: [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)

You are your employer’s most valuable asset! The way that you drive says everything about you and your company. Make a positive statement by following these work-related safe driving practices.

### Stay Safe

- Use a seat belt at all times – driver and passenger(s).
- Be well-rested before driving.
- Avoid taking medications that make you drowsy.
- Set a realistic goal for the number of miles that you can drive safely each day.
- If you are impaired by alcohol or any drug, do not drive.

### Stay Focused

- Driving requires your full attention. Avoid distractions, such as adjusting the radio or other controls, eating or drinking, and talking on the phone.
- Continually search the roadway to be alert to situations requiring quick action.
- Stop about every two hours for a break. Get out of the vehicle to stretch, take a walk, and get refreshed.

### Avoid Aggressive Driving

- Keep your cool in traffic!
- Be patient and courteous to other drivers.
- Do not take other drivers’ actions personally.
- Reduce your stress by planning your route ahead of time (bring the maps and directions), allowing plenty of travel time, and avoiding crowded roadways and busy driving times.

For more information on safe driving for work, refer to “Guidelines for Employers to Reduce Motor Vehicle Crashes” at <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/motorvehiclesafety/index.html>.

## Health Tip: Winter Weather Health Hazards and What to Do About Them

Source: <http://www.blr.com>

*Winter brings with it many special hazards. Train your employees to cope with cold temps and severe weather.*

Keeping warm and dry outside in severe winter weather is essential for protecting health. Everyone should know how to keep safe in severe weather and cold temperatures because you never know when you'll be caught outside or stranded in your vehicle under hostile weather conditions.

### Hypothermia

Hypothermia occurs when body temperature gets dangerously low.

- Windy conditions, fatigue, and wet clothing increase the risk of hypothermia.
- Hypothermia can even occur when temperatures are not that cold.
- Symptoms include cold and shivering followed by pain in the extremities and also numbness, stiffness, poor coordination, drowsiness, slow or irregular breathing and heart rate, slurred speech, cool skin, and puffiness in the face.

### Frostbite

Another common hazard associated with cold temperatures and severe winter weather is frostbite.

- Body parts most often affected are the nose, ears, cheeks, fingers, and toes. Skin may appear white and feel hard to the touch, but soft underneath. It is important to get out of the cold or protect the affected body part at the stage of these early symptoms.
- More serious symptoms include uncomfortably cold feeling, then numbness, which is accompanied by tingling, aching, or a brief pain. Skin darkens, looks grayish, and can blister.
- Severe frostbite can cause permanent tissue damage and loss of movement.

### Quick Tips for Healthy Living

## HEALTHY BITES

PREVEA  
Health & Wellness



**Get enough calcium and Vitamin D:** Calcium helps to keep your bones strong and less likely to break. Vitamin D helps your body use calcium. Both vitamin D and calcium are needed for strong bones

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Send us an email at:  
[jconnections@aol.com](mailto:jconnections@aol.com)  
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*In Loving  
Memory of Jessica Lehrke*