



State of Nevada

Department of Administration

RISK-Y BUSINESS

Risk Management Division

Volume 2009 – 4

Oct/Nov/Dec 2009

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Texting And Driving A Deadly Combination

Suddenly, those drivers talking on their cell phones seem relatively harmless, at least when compared to drivers who are staring at their cell phones, texting. An estimated 20 percent of drivers are sending or receiving text messages while behind the wheel, according to a Nationwide Insurance study. And, according to another poll, that number skyrockets to 66 percent when drivers 18 to 24 are isolated. The practice, especially popular among young people, is exacting a deadly toll.

No one knows how many vehicular crashes are related to drivers distracted by text messaging, but anecdotal evidence is mounting. A fiery crash made headlines in June when five female friends died in a collision with a tractor trailer just a week after graduating from their suburban Rochester,

N.Y., high school. Police discovered the teenage driver had been texting moments before the crash. Similar accidents are happening with increasingly regularity nationwide.

Now, at least 16 states are considering legislation that would outlaw or restrict the practice. "Certainly, texting is the issue du jour this year in the legislatures," says Matt Sundeen of the National Conference of State Legislatures. That means another fight over the role of government in regulating cell phone use, but it's one that proponents of new laws expect to win. Indeed, a Harris Interactive Poll from August shows 9 out of 10 American adults believe that sending text messages or E-mails while driving is "distracting, dangerous, and should be outlawed."

Only two states expressly prohibit texting while driving. Washington banned the practice last May, and New Jersey followed suit in November. Similar bills are now in the works in Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Sundeen cites two reasons for the proposed legislation: the growing sophistication of cell phones that increasingly cater to texting and, perhaps more important, the growing number of "high-profile accidents—and those always tend to translate into legislation."

Experts say anti-texting laws are following on the heels of a wave of more general bans on the use of cell phones while driving. Five states already prohibit all drivers from using hand-held phones, and 24 more have considered similar legislation. Several states have such restrictions for younger drivers.

Important Informational Video

Risk Management encourages you to spend 15 minutes viewing this excellent video from the Utah Department of Transportation about texting and driving. After you have viewed it, please share this link with your coworkers, family and friends and encourage them to watch it. This video will hopefully make a difference to someone and prevent more tragedies from occurring. <http://risk.state.nv.us/Texting%20and%20driving.htm>

News Regarding Workers' Compensation Volunteer Billings

Risk Management received a few inquiries concerning the billing procedure and workers compensation rates charged to various State agencies for their volunteers. We have updated the "Premium Procedures" information located within our website and encourage you to check it out:

<http://risk.state.nv.us/CY%202009%20Volunteer%20WComp%20Premium%20Procedure%20rev%209%202009.pdf>

We have also added a worksheet in Excel for you to use when calculating your agency's premium. Please note that under the "Premium Procedures" we are asking that you submit the worksheet together with a roster of volunteers when submitting your agency's billing.

A friendly reminder: Our office must receive the completed paperwork for each volunteer before the volunteer starts his/her assignment as follows:

- 1) Volunteer Application form;
- 2) Short description of the duties to be performed by the volunteer, intern, or Board Member; and
- 3) Memorandum of Understanding.

If you need assistance with anything regarding volunteers, please contact Mary Lehrer: mlehrer@risk.state.nv.us, phone: 775-687-3188 or Ana Andrews: amandrews@risk.state.nv.us, phone: 775-687-3191.

Put Away The Poisons

Keep household chemicals in locked cabinets and out of the reach of children. Look for signal words on labels that alert you to potentially poisonous product (e.g., "Caution," "Warning," or "Danger").

Store poisons, cleaners, and all other dangerous items in a place where children can't touch them. Use child locks on cabinets.



Post emergency numbers, including the Poison control hot-line number (1-800-222-1222), next to every phone.

Keep cleaners in their original containers. Do not mix them together because their contents could react with dangerous results.

STAY AWAKE! STAY ALERT!

THE FATIGUE FACTOR

Most people look forward to "falling back" to standard time from daylight savings time, and taking back that hour of sleep we lost last spring. Is one hour enough to settle our sleep debt? Not for the majority of American workers who are operating on much less than the recommended eight hours of sleep per day. Are you getting enough rest? This is an important question, because lack of sleep is more than a personal problem; it's a matter of workplace safety. Fatigue has been identified as a factor in many of the injuries and fatalities that Americans suffer annually.

SLEEP AND SAFETY

Your mind and body need rest to recover from the day's stresses and prepare for the next. Most adults need eight hours of sleep per day. Failure to get adequate sleep can lead to a host of dangerous physical and mental problems that can put life and limb at risk, including, on the moderate end, slow reaction times and lack of focus, and on the extreme end,

dozing off, road rage and hallucinations. Each day you deprive yourself of sleep, you build up a "sleep debt." That debt may not become apparent right away. But, like other debts, it can accumulate until suddenly you find yourself in over your head, and become too tired to work safely.

Tired workers are less motivated and more forgetful. They have a greater tendency to take risks. Poor performance due to fatigue is more noticeable with repetitive tasks that take more than 30 minutes, or are complex and require close attention. Fatigued workers tend to rely on others to keep up and often compensate for poor concentration by checking and re-checking their own work. Some employees never even make it to work. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration conservatively estimates that 100,000 police-reported crashes are the direct result of driver fatigue each year. This results in an estimated 1,550 deaths, 71,000 injuries, and \$12.5 billion in monetary losses.

Employees must recognize the signs of fatigue and take the steps that will help protect them and coworkers from fatigue-related incidents. They should also be encouraged to talk with their physicians to rule out possible sleep disorders. Once employees understand the importance of getting more rest and take steps to do so, it can help them be less stressed, work more safely and be more productive.



Agencies need to encourage their workers to make getting sufficient sleep a priority for both their own health and safety and that of others.

Continuing Classes From Risk Management

To enroll please use the NEATS System. If you do not have the resource to use NEATS, or have any questions, please call Mary Lehrer at (775) 687-3187.

Defensive Driving	10/14/09	Las Vegas	3016 W Charleston Suite 200
Defensive Driving	10/15/09	Las Vegas	555 E Washington St Room 1100
Defensive Driving	10/20/09	Carson City	201 S Roop St., Suite 201
Defensive Driving	10/22/09	Carson City	201 S Roop St., Suite 201
Defensive Driving	11/03/09	Ely	2115 Bobcat Drive
Defensive Driving	11/04/09	Ely	2115 Bobcat Drive
Defensive Driving	11/10/09	Carson City	201 S Roop St., Suite 201
Defensive Driving	11/12/09	Carson City	201 S Roop St., Suite 201
Defensive Driving	11/17/09	Las Vegas	4747 Vegas Drive
Defensive Driving	11/18/09	Las Vegas	4747 Vegas Drive
Defensive Driving	12/01/09	Carson City	201 S Roop St., Suite 201
Dealing W/Difficult People	10/20/09	Las Vegas	4747 Vegas Drive
Dealing W/Difficult People	10/27/09	Carson City	201 S. Roop St., Suite 201
Dealing W/Difficult People	11/03/09	Ely	2115 Bobcat Drive
Dealing W/Difficult People	11/04/09	Ely	2115 Bobcat Drive
Dealing W/Difficult People	11/17/09	Las Vegas	3016 Washington, Suite 200
Dealing W/Difficult People	11/24/09	Carson City	201 S. Roop St., Suite 201
Dealing W/Difficult People	12/02/09	Carson City	201 S. Roop St., Suite 201
Managing the Threat of Work Place Violence	10/20/09	Las Vegas	4747 Vegas Drive
Managing the Threat of Work Place Violence	10/27/09	Carson City	201 S. Roop St., Suite 201
Managing the Threat of Work Place Violence	11/03/09	Ely	2115 Bobcat Drive
Managing the Threat of Work Place Violence	11/04/09	Ely	2115 Bobcat Drive
Managing the Threat of Work Place Violence	11/17/09	Las Vegas	3016 W. Charleston Suite 200
Managing the Threat of Work Place Violence	11/24/09	Carson City	201 S. Roop St., Suite 201
Managing the Threat of Work Place Violence	12/02/09	Carson City	201 S. Roop St., Suite 201
Managing the Threat of Work Place Violence	2/08/09	Las Vegas	555 E. Washington St. Room 2450
Slips, Trips and Falls	11/12/09	Carson City	201 S. Roop St., Suite 201
Slips, Trips and Falls	11/18/09	Las Vegas	555 E. Washington St. Room 2450
CPR/AER/FA	11/19/09	Las Vegas	3016 W. Charleston Suite 200
CPR/AER/FA	11/23/09	Carson City	201 S. Roop St., Suite 201
Contagious Disease Prevention	11/05/09	Ely	2115 Bobcat Drive
Contagious Disease Prevention	11/10/09	Carson City	201 S. Roop St., Suite 201
Contagious Disease Prevention	11/18/09	Las Vegas	555 E. Washington St. Room 2450

RUSSELL ROCHA IS RISK MANAGEMENT'S NEW SAFETY SPECIALIST

Russell joined the Risk team in July 2009. He was formerly the Safety Manager for Q&D/Swinerton Builders for the Ritz Carlton Highlands Hotel Project in Truckee, CA, and has over 21 years of occupational safety and health experience.

His background includes process safety management, confined-space entry operations and rescue, incident command system, hazardous chemical handling, and emergency response and CPR/AED training and program development.

Some of his accomplishments are the application of AED's through a Department of Homeland Security grant program for the City of Sparks, designed and built a confined space rescue training structure, development of a computerized lock-out tag-out program and completed many successful process hazard analysis for highly hazardous chemicals.

Russell is a certified Occupational Safety and Health Technologist (OHST), a certified Construction Safety and Health Technician (CHST), a certified Basic Life Support trainer through the American Heart Association, Incident Command System 300 certified and an ICS trainer and a certified Hazardous Materials Technician.

Risk Management is happy to have Russell join the team. He can be reached at (775) 687-3191 or rocha@risk.state.nv.us.

TRUE OR FALSE?

Sad but true, most people think a fire drill is a waste of time and energy. You hear things like “Oh it’s only a drill, I don’t have to go,” or “I’m too busy, you go and let me know how it goes,” or “why do we have to do these drills all the time?” Fire and smoke are serious business; thousands of people are seriously burned or die every year. If drills were taken seriously, and a plan was in place, people would not be left behind or trapped in burning buildings. Practice your drills and there will be less panic and chaos and remember there is no such thing as a “False Alarm.” It’s not only the Governor’s wish

that all State employees be protected but also a law that all State employees participate in fire drills. **IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT MANAGEMENT, PARTICULARLY ADMINISTRATORS, SET A GOOD EXAMPLE BY PROMPTLY COOPERATING WITH ALL ALARMS AND DRILLS.** If your agency needs assistance in coordinating a drill or would like Risk Management to be a part of a drill, please call 687-3190.



Latest Report on Smoking By The Surgeon General



A report issued by the Surgeon General office concludes that in addition to the many other diseases listed in the intervening years, smoking can cause cancers of the cervix, kidney, pancreas and stomach, as well as abdominal aortic aneurysms, acute myeloid leukemia, cataracts, pneumonia and gum disease.

Among the other disorders listed since the first report, in 1964, are cancers of the esophagus, throat and bladder, chronic lung disease; and chronic heart and cardiovascular diseases.

Government figures show that 440,000 Americans a year are now dying of smoking-related illnesses. Smokers typically die 13 to 14 years earlier than nonsmokers. Treating those diseases costs about \$75 billion a year, according to government figures, and an even greater amount is sacrificed in lost productivity.

For the first time, however, the number of Americans who have quit smoking edges out the number who still smoke, the surgeon general said. An estimated 46 million Americans “have managed to beat the habit and quit,” he said, “while 45.8 million continue to smoke.” Of the entire adult population, people 18 or older, smokers now account

REACTING TO DIFFICULT PEOPLE

When dealing with people, be ready to react to the actions of different personalities. Some examples:

The Aggressor, who is intimidating, hostile and loves to threaten.

What to do: Listen to everything the person has to say. Avoid arguments and be formal, calling the person by name. Be concise and clear with your reactions.

The Underminer, who takes pride in criticism and is sarcastic.

What to do: Focus on the issues and don’t acknowledge sarcasm. Don’t overreact.

The Unresponsive, who is difficult and never reveals his or her ideas.

What to do: Ask open-ended questions, learn to be silent and wait for the person to say something. Be patient and friendly.

The Egotist, who knows it all and feels and acts superior.

What to do: Make sure you know the facts. Agree when possible and ask questions and listen. Disagree only when you know you’re right.



Workers’ Comp Question of the Quarter:



Can I go to any doctor, chiropractor or therapist that I choose?



You are advised to seek treatment from an authorized medical provider on the Provider Panel Utilized by Specialty Health. The Provider Directory is available online by visiting the Risk Management website and clicking on “Procedures & Forms for Employees”, and click on the “Provider Directory Box”. In the event of a serious injury, go to your nearest emergency room.

★ Be sure and check out our award-winning website at: www.risk.state.nv.us

