

Guidelines – Distracted Driving

Introduction:

Deadly crashes involving drivers distracted by text messaging and other activities highlight a growing danger on the roads nationwide. These activities cause drivers to take their eyes off the road and at least one hand off the steering wheel, endangering themselves and others. Therefore, the intent of these guidelines and requirements is to establish proper safety procedures and practices, as well as to promote and provide for a safer environment for students, faculty and staff.

Purpose:

To reduce the risk of a work related injury or death by maximizing personal and public safety while driving.

Goals:

To ensure that all faculty, staff and students know and understand the safe operating procedures involved with distracted driving.

General Information:

Distracted driving should be avoided at all times, and is defined as any activity that could divert your attention away from the primary task of driving, including:

1. Avoid at all times when driving:
 - a. Text messaging
 - b. Dialing a phone
 - c. Reading map/directions, newspaper
 - d. Looking for an address
 - e. Watching a video
 - f. Retrieving object from the floor/other location
 - g. Eating
 - h. Grooming i.e. combing hair, makeup, etc.
 - i. Driving while fatigued – if you are tired, don't drive. Pull over and rest.
2. Refrain from whenever possible
 - a. Looking at other occupants in the vehicle
 - b. Talking on the phone
 - c. Adjusting the music selection
 - d. Adjusting other vehicle controls
 - e. Drinking beverages
 - f. Activities related to smoking
3. Please be aware of these cognitive things that can affect your driving
 - a. Personal problems
 - b. Future event

- c. Inattentiveness

Text Messaging:

BSC employees are responsible for obeying the law, including any law that pertains to the safe operation of a vehicle. ND law bans texting while driving.

Below is the ND Law:

ND Century Code 39-08-23 Motor Vehicles – Regulations Governing Operators – Use of a wireless communications device prohibited:

1. The operator of a motor vehicle that is part of traffic may not use a wireless communications device to compose, read, or send an electronic message.
2. Under this section:
 - a. "Electronic message" means a self-contained piece of digital communication that is designed or intended to be transmitted between physical devices. The term includes e-mail, a text message, an instant message, a command or request to access a worldwide web page, or other data that uses a commonly recognized electronic communications protocol. The term does not include:
 - (1) Reading, selecting, or entering a telephone number, an extension number, or voice mail retrieval codes and commands into an electronic device for the purpose of initiating or receiving a telephone or cellular phone call or using voice commands to initiate or receive a telephone or cellular phone call;
 - (2) Inputting, selecting, or reading information on a global positioning system device or other navigation system device;
 - (3) Using a device capable of performing multiple functions, such as fleet management systems, dispatching devices, smartphones, citizen band radios, music players, or similar devices, for a purpose that is not otherwise prohibited;
 - (4) Voice or other data transmitted as a result of making a telephone or cellular phone call; or
 - (5) Data transmitted automatically by a wireless communication device without direct initiation by an individual.
 - b. "Traffic" means operation of a motor vehicle while in motion or for the purposes of travel on any street or highway and includes a temporary stop or halt of motion, such as at an official traffic-control signal or sign. The term does not include a motor vehicle that is lawfully parked.
3. This section does not apply if a wireless communications device is used for obtaining emergency assistance to report a traffic accident, medical emergency, or serious traffic hazard or to prevent a crime about to be committed, in the reasonable belief that an individual's life or safety is in immediate danger, or in an authorized emergency vehicle while in the performance of official duties.

Cell Phone Usage:

While it is not prohibited by law, it is a requirement of the North Dakota Risk Management Workers Compensation Discount Program and BSC safe operating procedures that employees refrain from using hand-held cell phones while operating a state fleet vehicle or their personal vehicle while engaged in job related activities, whether the vehicle is in motion or stopped at a traffic light. This includes, but is not limited to, answering or making phone calls, engaging in phone conversations, and reading or responding to emails and instant messaging. Some suggestions for using cell phones in vehicles include:

- a. Whenever possible, stay off the phone when driving. If possible, pull off the road to a safe area to use the phone.
- b. Use a hands-free device on the phone.
- c. Be familiar with your particular phone and its features. Position it within easy reach for an emergency.
- d. Let calls go to voicemail, listen to messages later.
- e. Place calls when not moving or before pulling into traffic.
- f. Do not take notes or look up information/phone numbers while driving.
- g. Do not engage in stressful or emotional conversations while driving.
- h. Know your route, use your GPS, and read maps beforehand.

- i. Be aware of vehicles around you.

**Driving is a privilege, and not a right.
Be careful so you can keep that privilege.**

References:

NDSU Risk Management Program

History of this Policy:

First draft reviewed by the Loss Control Committee on April 23, 2014, reviewed by the Operations Council on May 14, 2014 and revised/approved by the Executive Council on May 30, 2014.