

# Policies and Procedures for Cell Phone Usage While Driving

## Purpose

The organization is committed to safety excellence. This policy outlines guidelines for the use of wireless communication devices while operating vehicles and equipment.

Research has proven a direct co-relation between the use of wireless devices and the increased risk of being in an accident. Some provinces in Canada have passed a law making it illegal to use a hand-held device while operating a vehicle (this includes GPS devices, cellphones, iPods and/or other electronic driving distractions). Our organization is joining these provinces in supporting this very important position.

## Policy

Employees may not use wireless communication devices, either hand-held or hands-free, while operating a moving vehicle during company business. A moving vehicle can be a company or employee owned vehicle. Government legislation against the use of wireless devices shall overrule this Policy, except where this Policy is more stringent than the legislation, in which case the Policy shall overrule.

Communication devices covered by this policy include: hand-held and hands-free phones, car phones, mobile phones, text messaging devices, all smart phones, pagers and two-way radios.

It is not the intent of this policy to remove wireless communication devices from vehicles as they are important safety tools. It is suggested that the driver keep their cellular phone with them at all times so that contact may be made in the case of an emergency.

## Guidelines For Employees While Driving

1. Incoming calls are not to be answered until the employee has safely pulled the vehicle over and placed it "in park" or "in neutral with the emergency brake applied". At this point the employee may accept or return the call provided that the vehicle remains parked off the roadway for the duration of the call. Driving may resume when the communication has ended and it is safe to re-enter the normal flow of traffic.
2. Outgoing calls are not to be placed while driving. If an employee must make a call, they are to pull over safely, put the vehicle "in park" or "in neutral with the emergency brake applied" and then make the call. Driving may resume when the communication has ended and it is safe to re-enter the normal flow of traffic.
3. Text messaging or emailing is not to be performed while driving. If an employee must send a text message or email, they are to pull over safely, put the vehicle "in park" or "in neutral with the emergency brake applied" and then send the text message or email. Driving may resume when the communication has ended and it is safe to re-enter the normal flow of traffic.

## Guiding Principles

Safety is a priority. When pulling over to receive or place a call, employees are expected to consider their safety and the safety of those around them. Consider whether it is safe to stop before doing so. Look for potential hazards such as narrow shoulders, high congestion and busy freeways. It is important to assess the risks and stop only in an area that is safe and where resuming driving does not add unnecessary dangers.

Voicemails should make reference to not answering the phone while driving. For example:

“Hello, you have reached the cell phone of (employee name). I am either away from my phone or driving. Please leave a message and I will return your call as soon as I can. If your call is urgent, please contact (alternate personnel) directly at (phone number).”

## **Enforcement**

All employees are expected to fully comply with this policy. Violation of this policy is considered a serious offence and will result in various penalties ranging from corrective action to termination of employment.

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