

Adopt a Total Ban on Personal Electronic Device Use While Driving



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Since we began offering free RISK HELP to our [Affiliate Members](#) in 2012, we have answered a wide array of risk questions—some highly unusual. Last week we received this quirky question from two incredibly different member organizations: *should we adopt a complete ban on the use of personal electronic devices (PEDs) while driving?*

This National Safety Council infographic explains the danger of PED use while driving: [Hands-Free is Not Risk-Free](#). PEDs include both handheld and hands-free devices, which are both incredibly dangerous and lead to about **26% of all car crashes**.

After doing a bit of research for our Affiliates, I quickly concluded that a total ban on PED use while driving is the only sensible course of action for organizations that care about their staff members. After discussing it with my colleagues at the Center, we decided to adopt a total ban ourselves.

We also challenge our Affiliate Members and RISK eNews readers to adopt a total ban on PED use while driving. If you value your staff members and volunteers—the lifeblood of your mission—then [join our campaign today](#) and ban PED use while driving at your organization.

PED Use Risks

When asking our staff members and volunteers to drive on behalf of our organizations, we should do what we can to protect their safety. Providing safe vehicles, driver training and accident reporting policies are just a start. PED use while driving is a known safety risk for our team members. Did you know, that:

- A driver's level of cognitive distraction is about equal whether using a hands-free or hand-held cell phone (Source: AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety).
- More than 30 research studies have found that hands-free devices offer no safety benefit, because hands-free devices do not eliminate the cognitive distraction of conversation.
- 88.5 percent of Americans feel that a driver talking on a cell phone represents a somewhat or serious threat to their safety ([Source](#)).

- In December 2011, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) recommended that all 50 states and the District of Columbia enact complete bans of all portable electronic devices for all drivers—including [banning use of hands-free devices](#). This recommendation follows the agency’s total ban recommendation for commercial drivers issued in October, 2011 ([Source](#)).
- “...most employers with total ban cell phone policies report that the policies do not adversely impact productivity. Some even report that productivity improves.” (Source: National Safety Council)

In May 2015, the National Safety Council published a report titled, [Employer Liability and the Case for Comprehensive Cell Phone Policies](#), which advises: “The best action for employers is to implement a total ban policy that includes handheld and hands-free devices and prohibits all employees from using cell phones while driving.” The report reminds employers that if we expect staff members to use cell phones while driving, we are putting valued team members in harm’s way. This risk is unnecessary and at the Center, we believe it is unacceptable.

What Does a Total Ban Cover?

The Center recommends that you adopt a total ban on the use of PEDs by any employee or volunteer while driving on your nonprofit’s behalf. A comprehensive ban covers:

- Handheld and hands-free devices
- All employees
- All volunteers
- All of your owned, leased and rented vehicles
- All Personal Electronic Devices (including mobile phones and other electronic devices, such as tablets, in-vehicle infotainment systems, etc.)
- All work-related communications on a personal phone/device or in a personal vehicle

Over the years, a growing number of states have adopted limited PED bans. While no state completely bans PED use while driving, 14 states, DC, Puerto Rico, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands prohibit all drivers from using hand-held cell phones while driving (Source: [United States Conference of State Legislatures](#)).

Take a Stand for Safety

Implementing a “total ban” on the use of PEDs while driving won’t necessarily be easy. But the good news is that you don’t need to go it alone. The National Safety Council developed a [handy toolkit containing policy and communications tools](#) to help you get underway. The kit includes tools for educating employees about the risks of hands-free and handheld phone use while driving, and tips for gaining staff buy-in.

The following draft policy is inspired by the format developed and recommended by National Safety Council.

Ban on PED Use While Driving

[Name of Nonprofit] deeply values the safety and well-being of all employees and volunteers. Due to the increasing number of crashes resulting from the use of cell phones while driving, [Name of Nonprofit] employees and volunteers may not use cellular telephones or mobile electronic devices while operating a motor vehicle under any of the following situations, regardless of whether a hands-free device is used:

- When the employee or volunteer is operating a vehicle owned, leased or rented by [Name of Nonprofit].
- When the employee or volunteer is operating a personal motor vehicle in connection with [Name of Nonprofit] business.
- When the motor vehicle is on [Name of Nonprofit] property.
- When the cellular telephone or mobile electronic device is [Name of Nonprofit] owned or leased.
- When the employee or volunteer is using the cellular telephone or mobile electronic device to conduct [Name of Nonprofit] business.

Employees and volunteers will be given two warnings. The third time an employee or volunteer is found to be in violation of this policy, it is grounds for immediate dismissal.

Your signature below certifies your agreement to comply with this policy.

Employee/Volunteer Signature

Date

Join our PED Ban Campaign Now!

Each day the Center receives calls and emails from our members seeking advice about how to reduce risk in their environments. We invite you to reduce safety risks by joining us and adopting a total ban on PED use while driving. [JOIN NOW!](#) And forward this to other nonprofit leaders!

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