



Driver Safety For Service Mechanics

I. START-UP/BACK-UP

Objective: To prevent start-up/back-up accidents by anticipating the hazards involved and knowing how to safely control them.

- A. Walk around vehicle and look underneath to ensure you have safe clearance for start-up.
- B. Check vehicle ladder & materials racks for security.
- C. Use warning flag to mark end of ladder/materials hanging over the top of the truck.
- D. Check blind area on right and in front as well.
- E. After your walk-around check, don't delay in moving vehicle. Do not allow time for another hazard to approach.
- F. Check mirrors for proper adjustment frequently.
- G. Start up slowly at first to allow other vehicles and pedestrians, who may have unexpectedly approached, to safely move away.
- H. Tap horn in congested areas or recruit a signalman.
- I. Ensure that all passengers have buckled their seatbelts properly.

II. DISTRACTED DRIVING

Distracted Driving is the diversion of attention from driving, because the driver is temporarily focusing on an object, person, task, or event not related to driving, which reduces the driver's awareness, decision-making, and/or performance, leading to an increased risk of corrective actions, near-crashes, or crashes. There are three categories of distractions.

Visual: Taking your eyes off the road

Manual: Taking your hands off the wheel

Cognitive: Taking your mind off driving

Some of the most common activities that result in work-related distracted driving include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Texting;
- Talking on a cell phone;
- Interacting with a GPS;
- Interacting with a radio, personal music player, etc.;
- Reacting emotionally to another driver;
- Reading a map or other reading materials;
- Grooming;
- Eating;
- Drinking
- Smoking;
- Interacting with others in the vehicle.

Drivers talking on cell phones, regardless of whether they're using hands-free devices, may be looking right at but often don't see what's happening ahead of them. This is referred to as *inattention blindness*, which is a little bit like tunnel vision where peripheral vision is lost, but central vision remains. In the state of *inattention blindness* the cognitive distraction from the conversation won't let the brain process everything in the roadway ahead. The bottom line is the human brain is completely incapable of multi-tasking, that is performing two tasks at exactly the same time. In reality the brain focuses back and forth between tasks including driving the distracting activity. Since the back and forth focus in the brain occurs very quickly, many drivers incorrectly and dangerously believe that they are safely multi-tasking. However, the back and forth focus taking place in the brain may take several tenths of a second, which equates to much slower reaction times and much greater distances traveled before being able to stop the vehicle or otherwise react to the situation in the road. Reaction times are even slower when a driver's eyes are not on the road, such as when he is texting or reading a map.

III. DEFENSIVE DRIVING

Objective: To prevent accidents by trying to anticipate hazardous situations and adjusting driver behavior to compensate.

- A. Learn to recognize driving situations that can be hazardous.
- B. Assume other drivers will make errors.
- C. Adjust speed, position, direction and attention to be able to maneuver safely if a hazard develops.
- D. Scan far enough ahead to be able to react safely to approaching situations.
- E. Scan frequently to the side and rear for passing or approaching vehicles.
- F. Scan thoroughly before changing speed or direction.

IV. RIGHT-OF-WAY

Objective: To prevent accidents by drivers giving "right-of-way" until it is apparent that right-of-way is being given by the other driver.

- A. Do not force other drivers to brake or steer because of your obstructive maneuver into their path.
- B. Assume other drivers will not see you and avoid you when you maneuver into their path.
- C. Move into your intended path or direction only after you are assured you will not conflict with other traffic

V. PASSING

Objective: To prevent accidents during passing by anticipating the hazards involved and knowing how to safely avoid them.

- A. Before you pass, check to be certain no one is passing you.
- B. Assume the driver in front of you doesn't know you are passing. That driver may pull to the left to pass a vehicle in front or make a left turn.

- C. While you are passing, watch carefully for vehicles that may be entering the roadway from side roads or driveways.
- D. Assume vehicles approaching from the opposite direction will not see you or slow down for you to complete your passing maneuver.
- E. Watch out for vehicles passing other vehicles from the opposite direction.
- F. If the vehicle you are trying to pass speeds up, let it go. Don't get into a dangerous race.
- G. Don't take risks. If in doubt, don't pass.
- H. Signal your intentions to pass.

VI. USING AND CHANGING LANES

Objective: To prevent accidents during lane use and lane changing by recognizing the potential hazards and knowing how to safely control them.

- A. The most important rule in lane usage is to maintain a safe following distance. Use any method you feel comfortable with. Just try to ensure that if the driver in front of you slams on his brakes, you can avoid a collision, stay in your lane and not be hit by the vehicle following you all at the same time.
- B. Try to scan ahead of what is immediately in front of you.
- C. If you see trouble ahead, flash your brake lights to alert drivers following you.
- D. If you cannot see ahead of the vehicle you are following, increase your following distance.
- E. It might swerve into the next lane to avoid a slow or stopped vehicle and leave you exposed to a rear-end collision.
- F. Blind spots to the right of large vehicles are well known. However, automobile drivers may not know you cannot see them as they pass you on the right. Scan to the right thoroughly before steering into the next lane. Give right-of-way, don't take it.
- G. Clean mirrors and check adjustment frequently.

VII. PARKING

Objective: To prevent accidents when parked, by anticipating the hazards involved and knowing how to safely avoid them.

- A. Always try to park your vehicle off the road altogether. Even leaving a small portion of your vehicle on the travel lane creates a serious hazard.
- B. If you pull off onto the shoulder, turn on your flashers day or night. At night, drowsy drivers who see only taillights on your vehicle may follow you onto the shoulder thinking you are still moving.
- C. If a sudden breakdown or other emergency forces you to park on a travel lane, turn on your flashers immediately. Then set up reflective triangles at the proper distances immediately. If you have a CB, call for help. At night, this is an especially hazardous situation for both you and other drivers, be extremely careful.

VIII. DRIVING IN ADVERSE CONDITIONS

Objective: To prevent accidents by developing the driver skills and judgment necessary to operate vehicle safely during adverse traction and visibility conditions.

A. Reduced traction conditions:

1. Increase following distance enough to avoid a rear-end collision if other driver brakes hard.
2. Use moderation in judging safe speed. To maintain a safe stopping distance, slow down, but not so much that you become a hazard to drivers behind.
3. Apply brakes gently and steer without jerky movements.
4. Beware of traveling too slowly on slick, banked curves. The vehicle might slide sideways into opposing traffic or off the road.

B. Reduced visibility conditions:

1. Use moderation in judging safe speed. To maintain a safe stopping distance during reduced visibility, slow down, but not so much that you become a hazard to drivers behind. Keep vehicle clean, especially headlights, windshield, taillights. Use emergency flashers in extreme conditions.
2. Be prepared to get off road and wait for conditions to improve if necessary.

SAMPLE POLICY LANGUAGE

Mechanical construction and service companies have varying needs depending on the types of mechanical services they provide, their customers' needs, and their own geographic locations. Therefore, policy language established by one company may not be conducive to the needs of another. Samples of policy language being used by MCAA and MSCA members are as follows. *Note: MCAA and MSCA strongly recommend that all policies addressing distracted driving strictly prohibit texting while driving.*

A. Cell Phone/Blackberry/Texting and Other Communication Devices

The use of cellular/mobile phones (handheld and hands-free), texting or using other handheld devices (e.g. Blackberry, PDA) and laptop computers, is not permitted while operating a vehicle. Using cell phone/blackberry/and other communication devices while driving leads to an increased risk of having an accident. Other increased risk from inattention can involve adjusting the radio, eating, smoking, talking to passengers, and other distractions.

- Allow voice mail to handle your calls and return them when you are not driving.
- If you need to place or receive a call, pull off the road to a safe location.
- Inform regular callers of your driving schedule and when you will be available to talk.
- Keep your hands on the wheel and your eyes and mind on the road while driving.
- Pull off the road to a safe location when looking at maps or a GPS.

B. Mobile Phone Policy Recommendation for Use By Individual Employers

Cell phones, mobile phones, personal digital assistants* (PDA's) and other related devices are useful for individuals and companies and can add to the productivity of employees and their employers. However, these communication devices, if used without restriction or common sense, may detract from individual and company productivity and compromise safety. In order to create a productive and safe working environment the use of these devices are restricted by the Company.

Personal Mobile Phones

Personal mobile phone calls or text-messaging is a distraction and is non-productive in the work place. Personal calls or text messages are only allowed during breaks or lunch times. Personal phones and other devices shall be turned off or silenced during working hours. The company will not be held liable for the loss of personal cell phones at the workplace. The use of mobile devices while operating a motor vehicle is STRICTLY PROHIBITED.

*Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) is defined as any handheld computer, mobile phone, smart phone, web browser or portable media player. Today the vast majority of PDA's are "smart phones," but for the purposes of this policy, PDA's also include non-phone stand along PDA's and company pagers.

Additional Considerations (not part of this policy)

Certain companies may allow use of hands-free devices, provide further guidance to employees, or have additional exceptions to “strictly prohibiting” use of mobile devices while driving. Review applicable local and state laws regarding the use of these devices. In addition, since a policy of this nature may include “conditions of employment” or disciplinary actions, consider having your local Union review/approve the policy for local bargaining agreement conformity.

C. Mobile Phone Use Policy

At (Company Name Here) we recognize that our employees are our most valuable asset, and contribute to our continued growth and success. We are firmly committed to the safety of our employees and will do everything to prevent workplace accidents, and are committed to providing a safe working environment for all employees.

This policy has been established as guidance to our employees who, by nature of their work, are required to be accessible by telephone regardless of the time of day, day of the week, or geographical location. Service equipment shall be determined by job description to fulfill the need of each specific employee.

(Company Name Here) employees are strongly discouraged from using a company provided mobile phone for personal use. Personal mobile phone calls or text-messaging is a distraction and is non-productive in the work place. Personal calls or text messages are only allowed during breaks or lunch times. Personal phones shall be turned off or silenced during working hours. However, personal calls may be acceptable as a result of work related situations, such necessity to work unanticipated overtime. These calls should be brief and to the point. *Handheld mobile phone use while operation a motor vehicle is STRICTLY PROHIBITED.* ‘Mobile phone use’ includes making and receiving calls, text messaging (texting), emailing, etc.

Driver inattention is a factor in a majority of motor vehicle accidents. We are not only concerned about your welfare as an employee, but also the welfare of others who could be put in harm’s way by inattentive driving. The following items should be considered in regards to mobile phone use while driving:

- The driver’s primary responsibility is the safety of themselves, other drivers, pedestrians, and the passengers in the vehicle.
- It is important to comply with all state and local laws governing mobile phone use while driving. Please contact your safety officer for any current laws which may be applicable to the geographical area that you may be working in.
- Allow your voicemail to handle your calls and return them at a safe time.
- If you are required to make or receive a call, pull over to the side of the road, stop the vehicle so you can safely use your mobile phone or ask the caller for permission to talk to them at a better and safer time.
- Avoid any calls that may involve any stressful or emotional conversations.
- Avoid the use of phones in difficult traffic conditions or adverse weather.
- If possible, use a passenger to receive or make mobile phone calls.

D. Safety Issues for Cellular Phone Use

Safety is valued at (Company Name Here). The following guidelines will help prevent vehicle accidents and protect our employees' overall health and safety as well as the health and safety of those around us.

Employees are prohibited from using cell phones and related technology (text messaging, calendaring, reviewing contact list, i-pods, earpieces, etc.) while driving company vehicles (this includes slow or stopped traffic). This also applies to the following:

- Any and all times employees drive company vehicles (regardless of whether it is on company time).
- Any and all times employees drive personal vehicles to perform their job or for business on behalf of the company.

(Company Name Here) also strongly encourages employees to refrain from using cell phones and related technology during non-work/personal time while driving. Distracted driving is a factor in 1 out of 4 crashes nationally.

To meet the operational demands of the business, it may be necessary to contact an employee who is driving a vehicle. If an employee is called, the following guidelines will be used:

The phone number (insert phone number) is designated as a priority/urgent phone number. Please program this phone number with a specific urgency ring tone. This ring tone will prevent the employee from needing to glance at the phone. If an employee receives a call from this number, follow the procedure below.

CALL BACK ASAP: Employee will find the next closest and safest location to stop the vehicle and return the call. Special care should be taken in situations where there is traffic, inclement weather or the employee is driving in an unfamiliar area. Remember to use common sense. Returning a phone call will never take precedence over safety.