

Federal Government Cracking Down on Distracted Driving by Workers

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Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of fatalities among employees in the United States. In 2009, President Barack Obama signed an executive order issuing a federal government-wide prohibition on the use of texting or text messaging while driving. In light of this growing phenomenon, the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration ("OSHA") and the U.S. Department of Transportation are partnering to develop initiatives to persuade employers to help combat distracted driving. Specifically, OSHA plans to begin an educational campaign aimed at employers to prevent distracted driving by their employees and to engage in specific alliances with other safety organizations to promote this initiative. Additionally, to prevent distracted driving OSHA plans to post model employer policies on its website and the agency is committed to investigating credible complaints that an employer requires texting while driving. OSHA's purpose is to eliminate workplace hazards, and the agency is adding distracted driving caused by employer practices or policies to its list of workplace hazards. If your workforce includes drivers, or your other employees sometimes use their cars or company vehicles in their work, you should consider implementing a policy prohibiting the use of texting or text messaging while driving.

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