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Transportation-related accidents are consistently the leading causes of on-the-job fatalities in Texas. Whether running an errand to the bank or driving a company truck on a service call, employees perform work-related activities in moving vehicles. How many times a day do you see inattentive drivers talking or sending text messages on cell phones? These tasks often end in tragedy, and they can affect your business' bottom line.

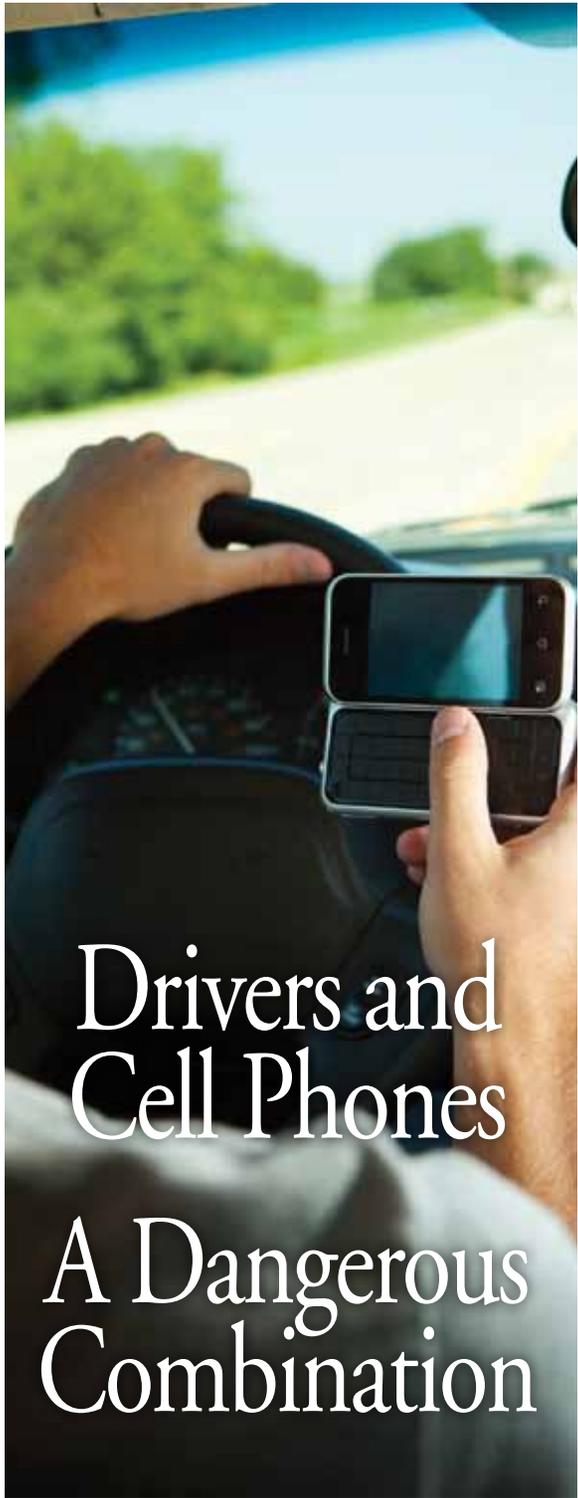


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Printed July 2011



Drivers and  
Cell Phones  
A Dangerous  
Combination



## Case study

An employee was driving between job locations in her personal vehicle. She veered full-speed into a pole. The accident investigation uncovered evidence that she had dropped her cell phone, removed her seat belt to retrieve it and veered into the pole.

## Common driver distractions

### Talking on the cell phone

If you have field employees, chances are they communicate primarily by cell phone. Does your drivers' safety policy address cell phone use? If it doesn't, it should.

If one of your employees is injured, it doesn't matter whether they're driving a company or personal vehicle. As long as the employee is on company business, and the employer required or understood that the employee was talking on the cell phone while on business, the company could be held liable.

Hands-free devices are not necessarily safe alternatives to cell phones. Research has shown that hands-free devices distract drivers. Instruct employees to turn off their cell phones and put them away where they won't be tempted to answer.

### Text messaging

Text messaging requires us to take our eyes off the road. At 40 mph, your car travels approximately the length of a football field in five seconds. Those few seconds could cost an employee or another driver their life.

## What can employers do?

- Implement a drivers' safety policy that includes basic safe driving rules, cell phone policies, seat belt requirements, and other safe practices to eliminate or minimize drivers' distractions.
- Before you allow employees to drive for the company, check their driving records to ensure they meet your standards. Recheck driving records at least once a year.

- Remind employees not to answer cell phones while driving. If they must make a call or send a text, instruct them to pull off the road to a safe location.
- Use Texas Mutual's free drivers' safety resources in the Safety Resource Center at [texasmutual.com](http://texasmutual.com).

## What can employees do?

- A little planning can help you avoid distractions, such as talking on the cell phone, text messaging, changing the radio station and eating while driving.
- Only use your cell phone when you are safely stopped. If you must take a call, use a hands-free device, and pull off the road to a safe location to finish the call.
- Obey driving laws, and practice safe driving habits.

A drivers' safety program can help you protect your employees and your bottom line. Visit the Safety Resource Center at [texasmutual.com](http://texasmutual.com) for these free safety training materials.

**Online video.** Lasting Consequences of Distracted Driving

**Sample program.** Cell Phone Policy

**Handout.** OSHA Safe Driving Practices for Employees

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