

Cell Phone Safety

For additional information, including assistance in implementing any risk control guidelines, please contact your regional Risk Control Specialist or NCACC Risk Management Agency staff. We will be glad to assist you.

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Mobile phone use while driving is common but controversial. Because being distracted while operating a motor vehicle has been shown to increase the risk of accident, most employers ban cellphone use while driving – some banning handheld phone use only but allowing hands-free use, while others prohibit all cell phone use while driving.



Further complicating matters, the increasing complexity of mobile phones has made them more like mobile computers in their available uses. This has introduced additional difficulties for employers, as employees may use a cell phone for a myriad of non-business purposes above and beyond simply using them to make personal phone calls, as well as presenting added opportunities to contribute to distracted driving.

As a result, it is recommended that counties clearly formulate and implement a clear and concise cell phone policy. This policy should include:

- County-issued cell phones are for business purposes only, unless otherwise authorized by a department head. They are not to be used for non-work related communications, except when special circumstances arise as described below.
- Safe operation of a motor vehicle requires a driver's undivided attention. Therefore, using a cell phone while driving on county business is prohibited (except in an emergency situation as noted below). This rule applies whether the cell phone is county-issued or personal. It also applies to both placing and receiving phone calls, as well as to either texting or reviewing a text message. Employees should plan calls to allow placement either prior to traveling or while on rest breaks. If an employee must make or receive a call while en route, every effort should be made to pull over to a safe location and stop the car.
- Employees in possession of county cell phones are required to take appropriate precautions to prevent theft and/or vandalism of this county-owned equipment.
- If unforeseen circumstances develop where employees must use their county-issued cell phone to make a personal call, such as to let family know an employee will be home late, it is up to the department head to determine whether the employee should reimburse the county for the phone call.
- In an emergency situation, the employee should use their own best judgment as to whether violation of a cell phone restriction or prohibition is warranted. The employee's personal safety should always be paramount.