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National Drive Safely Work Week Oct. 5-9
MICHIGAN'S TRAFFIC SAFETY OFFICE, GOVERNORS HIGHWAY SAFETY ASSOCIATION
RECOMMEND LIMITS, BANS ON CELL USE WHILE DRIVING

As businesses in the state and across the nation prepare to remind their workforces about safe driving practices as part of Drive Safely Work Week (DSWW), the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) and the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) recommend employers review cell phone and texting use policies for their organization.

"Every company is different and has individual needs with regard to communication on the road," said Michael L. Prince, OHSP director. "We are encouraging every employer to consider adopting a policy for their employees to send a clear message that driving distractions are potentially dangerous and carry unnecessary risks. Warnings simply do not change behavior."

The GHSA recommends banning cell phone use and texting by all employees while driving for business purposes and encourages companies to develop and use systems that would limit or disable certain cell phone functions while an employee is driving.

In 2008, 908 Michigan drivers involved in a crash reported they were using a cell phone prior to the crash. Michigan crash data does not capture information specific to text messaging. Last year, there were a total of 316,057 traffic crashes.

While other distractions do occur during driving, curbing or reducing the use of cell phones while driving is one way to minimize the risk of traffic crashes and related injuries to employees.

DSWW is the annual workplace safety campaign of the Network for Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS) that seeks to remind employees of safe driving practices on and off the job.

The Michigan NETS program encourages employers to adopt safe driving policies, reward employees for safety belt use, include articles in company newsletters, display posters and provide safe driving reminders and tips throughout the year.