



Kick Distracted Driving to the Curb and Promote a Safer Workforce



Introduction

The Costs of Mobile Device-Related Accidents

The problem of distracted driving continues to worsen, fueling a growing global crisis and a public outcry for better solutions to prevent mobile device use behind the wheel. It's particularly risky for employers whose workers drive company-owned or leased vehicles. The National Safety Council (NSC) reports that distracted driving is a leading cause of fatal crashes, and 38 percent of all workplace fatalities involve transportation incidents (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).¹

In addition to the safety risks, distracted driving poses significant financial liability for a company.² For accidents that occur at the workplace, an organization may face legal action that could result in sizable monetary losses. About 60% of financial losses from crashes relate to distracted driving – particularly mobile device distractions.³



Distracted driving is commonly referred to as the “new DUI.” But unlike impaired driving due to alcohol use, it's harder to control and enforce. More than ever, highway regulatory authorities are aggressively trying to prevent distracted driving through increased legislation. Forty-eight states now have laws that prohibit texting while driving, and 30 states have banned hand-held cell phone use on the road.⁴ However, the NSC asserts that even talking on a hands-free device is still considered dangerous because the driver's mind is distracted.

As distracted driving-related accidents continue to climb, so does an employer's duty of care on many fronts. The idea that an employer may share responsibility for severe or fatal motor vehicle accidents caused by a distracted driver is not new. In certain states, such as Indiana and Illinois, there are laws under which employers can be held liable after such accidents involving an employee on the job at the time of the crash. Whether an employee is using a company-provided or personal phone and driving a company-owned vehicle or personal vehicle, an employer could be held responsible. Mobile phone records can be subpoenaed to show who the driver was talking to or texting at the time of the accident.

Employees who bring mobile phones and other devices into your company vehicle create liability exposure, putting your organization at serious financial and legal risk. Distracted driving lawsuits resulting from negligence or misconduct can result in millions of dollars in fines. Aside from these stiff penalties, these incidents can cost a business its reputation.⁵ Brand damage can take months or even years to repair. Even worse, if lives are lost from distraction-related crashes, nothing can ever recover such catastrophic losses.

It's increasingly clear that today's business leaders must step up their corporate social responsibility and do more to proactively prevent distractions caused by employees using mobile technology while driving. But how can a company solve this problem? Let's explore some standard options.

The Benefits and Limitations of Popular Approaches



Company Policies

Benefits

Many employers practice due diligence when it comes to protecting the safety of their workers. An important step is establishing a written policy requiring employees to use only hands-free devices for phone calls while operating a vehicle or not to engage in texting or emailing behind the wheel. Such policies provide a document that's visible to all employees. Still, they need to be communicated consistently and frequently, both in person and in writing. They should also be reinforced through reminders or refresher training. Finally, employers must follow through by warning and issuing consequences to employees who repeatedly violate these rules, including job termination if necessary.

Many employees are willing to adopt a policy – that's the easy part. But ongoing training and enforcement take time and energy and some won't invest...you can buy sheet music but if you don't practice, you'll never be able to play the piano.⁶

Limitations

While having a safe driving policy is the first thing a company can and should do, a paper contract, reminders and even disciplinary action will not keep drivers from accessing their mobile devices on the road. The reality is that even if a business drafts a written document designed to prohibit workers from using their devices while driving, that policy alone may not be enough protection to shield an employer's responsibility in a fatal crash. Rarely does this "carrot and stick" approach work by itself. There is no way to enforce policies at scale without other tools, such as technology.



Telematics

Benefits

Telematics is a method of monitoring an asset (car, truck, heavy equipment or even ship) using GPS and onboard diagnostics to record movements on a computerized map.⁷ Information from the vehicle is recorded via a small telematics device, also called a "black box," and other connected hardware or sensors. The upside is that such technology can monitor location, trip distance, time, idling, fuel consumption, engine performance, seat belt usage, and even speeding, hard cornering or harsh braking to give employers a snapshot into an employee's risky driving behaviors. For example, companies can view and export reports to gain insight into the highest number of speeding incidents or vehicles due for maintenance.

Limitations

While telematics solutions offer a glimpse into an employee's unsafe driving practices and flag concerns, it can be challenging to discern if erratic or impulsive maneuvers were due to mobile device distractions or other unrelated on-the-road incidents (such as a car in front braking suddenly to avoid hitting an animal on the road). Telematics provides important in-vehicle feedback, but only after the fact, so employee coaching is reactive versus proactive. It does nothing to prevent mobile device usage behind the wheel. Again, these data points provide only pieces of the puzzle, not the complete picture.





In-Vehicle Cameras

Benefits

Mounting a camera inside a vehicle is a popular approach, and many available models are on the market. The advantage is that it captures a visual record of whether a driver is using a mobile device while operating the vehicle. Because cameras digitally document driving behavior, an employer can view this footage, detect device-related distractions, and coach workers against it. Employees who know they are being “watched” on camera may, in turn, change their driving behaviors and be more diligent about device use. Cameras with artificial intelligence can correct poor behaviors in real-time.

Limitations

While visual recordings can be useful for companies looking for signs of unwanted driving behaviors, they also create an audit trail should there be an accident. A high volume of reporting and raw data can often render the data unmanageable and nearly impossible to act upon.

On top of the administrative burden, cameras only document; they don’t solve or prevent mobile device use on the road. It’s like letting a friend who has been drinking drive. Is it better to let them get behind the wheel with a camera in their car or to not let them drive under the influence in the first place? The wiser choice would be to supplement camera use with a more preventative solution.

Finally, some drivers view inward-facing dash cams as an invasion of privacy.⁸ Others have observed that cameras call them out for necessary behaviors like scratching their face or moving hair out of their eyes.⁹ These factors can create a culture of mistrust and impact employee morale.



Mobile Apps

Benefits

Dozens of software apps designed to help prevent distracted driving are available on the consumer market. Employees can download them onto their mobile devices. Relatively low cost and even free, most apps are easy to use and work in various ways. Some apps block or silence incoming calls and texts when the car is running or has reached a certain speed; others disable a phone completely. Still, others provide a rating system to score a driver’s trip and pinpoint moments of distracted driving.

Limitations

As plentiful as they are, many of these apps are consumer-focused and contingent on the individual worker to enable them. Therefore, employees can opt out or remove them from their devices at will, leaving the company with zero ability to manage such apps at an enterprise level and ensure compliance overall. Many of these apps also tend to be geared more toward teenage drivers and offer less sophisticated features than a solution specifically designed for business or corporate use.



Bottom Line

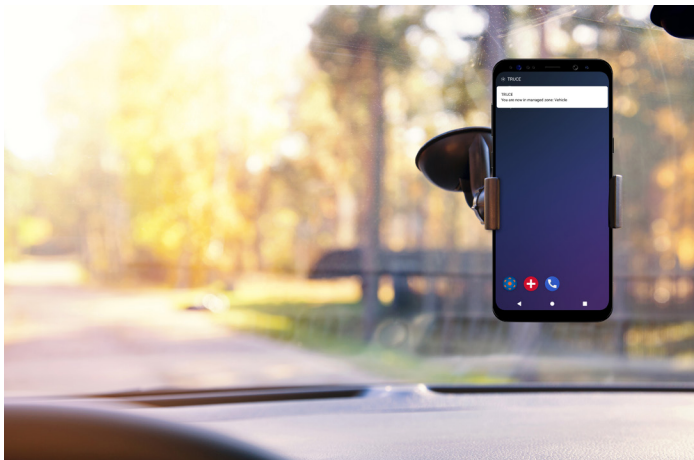
While many reasonable options are available to detect and reduce the potential for device-related distracted driving accidents, none go far enough to address the real problem. These solutions may be able to tackle specific aspects of the issue. Still, the real focus needs to be on prevention.

A Smarter Solution

Contextual Mobility Management

Business leaders are proactively eliminating distracted driving risks by applying a smarter approach to ensure drivers aren't using mobile devices on the road. There needs to be a more effective, intuitive, and productive way of managing mobility in the workplace. When drivers get away with driving distracted, they often practice this bad habit until a crash occurs or they are caught and suffer consequences. Ultimately, it would be better to prevent these incidents from occurring in the first place. And there is a solution for that.

Contextual Mobility Management (CMM) allows employers to define acceptable mobile device usage policies and ensure they are fully enforced. CMM software automatically detects whether a worker is behind the wheel of a moving vehicle and suppresses unwanted or unsafe distractions, including incoming calls, texts, or emails, and even access to social media channels and gaming apps, allowing the driver to drive.



With CMM, certain apps on an employee's personal or company-owned cell phone, tablet, or other device are served up and made available depending on their unique context – or situation, location, and time. CMM is not about controlling end-user devices but rather enabling employees to access particular apps at the right time and

place. The company determines which apps are accessible and when. For example, work-essential apps, such as navigation, would still function.

CMM versus MDM: What's the Difference?

CMM is different from traditional Mobile Device Management (MDM), which is primarily used to remotely configure, update, support and track multiple devices on a network. MDM is not designed to monitor or change employee behavior such as distracted driving. Overall, CMM enhances the capabilities of an MDM, providing important capabilities that MDM can't do alone.

Benefits of CMM

CMM takes the guesswork out of mobile device policy compliance. At its core, CMM is an integral way businesses should manage mobility. The software can be configured to fit the requirements of a specific workforce and company policy.

CMM complements the other popular device distraction solutions and helps companies to reinforce their written safe driving policies by:

- Using a proactive vs. reactive approach – Once the worker's environment (such as in a car) is identified, apps and functionality on that individual's device are temporarily enabled or disabled in real-time, not after the fact.
- Preventing opt-outs and workarounds – CMM is tamper-proof, so individuals cannot disable it without IT professional support.
- Providing manageability at an enterprise level – Business leaders and authorized personnel can monitor and manage mobile device policies centrally with one uniform and consistent approach, which helps to enforce compliance across the workforce.

Conclusion

Steer Clear of Potential Risks with CMM

As the old saying goes, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” CMM minimizes the risk of device-related accidents from the start. It can be used alone or to enhance other traditional approaches – policies, telematics, cameras, etc. – to ensure that employees can’t access unnecessary apps behind the wheel. Avoid serious financial, legal, and reputational risks by addressing distracted driving today. With CMM, you can automatically and proactively keep your employees and the communities they serve safe from distracted driving.

About TRUCE

At TRUCE®, we believe there’s a better way to leverage all a mobile device has to offer in the workplace, while still protecting what’s most important – your employees, your assets and your IP. TRUCE offers the first Contextual Mobility Management solution, providing flexible, situational enforcement of your mobile device policy, allowing companies to temporarily enable or suspend mobile apps based on the work being performed, the work location, or even the user or work group. Our patented technology adds a layer of contextual intelligence to traditional mobile device management approaches and operates on both iOS and Android platforms.

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