

October 4-8: Campaign to Prevent Work-Related Car Accidents

On behalf of Johnston, Moore & Thompson

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As we mentioned in our [August 13 post](#), car and truck accidents are the most common type of work-related fatal accidents. Additionally, when it comes to motor vehicle accidents during the course of employment, distracted driving is one of the leading culprits. Tragically, distractions like texting and cell phone use while driving are a growing cause of workers' compensation claims and wrongful deaths.

On September 21, Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis announced that OSHA will be taking on a leadership role in promoting work-related driver safety. The announcement, made in concert with David Michaels, Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA alerted employers that OSHA will be investigating on-the-job [car accidents](#) and examining work rules for employees who drive on the job.

OSHA will now issue citations and penalties if it determines or receives a credible complaint that an employer is requiring texting while driving. The workplace safety agency will offer education and resources for employers to help them put distracted driver policies in place. It also plans a special outreach program for younger workers.

"Secretary Solis and Assistant Secretary Michaels have issued a wake-up call to employers who require their employees to engage in distracting activities while driving," said Janet Froetscher, head of the National Safety Council (NSC), a workplace safety advocacy organization.

"As Secretary Solis noted in her announcement, the OSHA Act clearly states that employers must provide a workplace free of recognized hazards," said Froetscher. "Sending or reading text messages and e-mails while driving are clearly recognized hazards." About 500 NSC-member employers currently have policies banning all cell phone use by employees driving for work.

Network of Employers for Traffic Safety Sponsors 'Drive Safely Work Week' Oct. 4-8

A non-profit partnership of employers dedicated to promoting workplace traffic safety, the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS) has sponsored an annual workplace driver safety week since 1996. The campaign is called "Drive Safely Work Week."

The 2010 campaign is particularly focused on distracted driving and how employers can implement policies and create a workplace culture that encourages safe driving.

The campaign provides activities, a daily focus and safety tips, as well as how employers can:

- Prepare their organizations to launch a new texting and cell phone use policy or reinforce an existing policy
- Build awareness of the causes of distracted driving and its cost in terms of car accidents, commercial truck accidents, [workers' compensation claims](#), worker injuries and fatalities

If your company would like to participate in the campaign next week or any time of the year, campaign materials are available at the NETS ["Drive Safely Work Week" campaign website](#).

Sources:

- "Drive Safely Work Week Is October 4-8, 2010" (Network of Employers for Traffic Safety, September 2010)
- "NSC Commends DOL, OSHA for Action on Distracted Driving" (Occupational Health & Safety magazine, September 28, 2010)