



# Cell Phone Policy Kit

## Tips on Building Employee Buy-In

Reducing the number of distracted driving crashes will be more successful if employees actively support a cell phone policy, which requires them to go beyond just understanding and accepting it.

National Safety Council members who responded to a 2009 survey about cell phone policies recognize the importance of employee buy-in. Companies currently without policies reported that “lack of employee support” was the No. 1 barrier. “Competing job priorities” and “lack of management commitment” were the No. 2 and No. 3 barriers. While most members believe a policy would benefit their companies, they expect to receive more support from management than from employees.

### Evidence of Public Support

Numerous 2009 public opinion polls show the public recognizes the dangers of distracted driving and supports bans on cell phone use while driving:

- The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found 80 percent of motorists rated distracted driving, including talking on cell phones, as a “very serious threat” to their safety. Even those who admitted to distracted driving acknowledged they were putting themselves in danger.
- Nationwide Insurance Co. found that 80 percent of its poll respondents support legislation to restrict cell phone use while driving. In addition, 75 percent believe laws should apply to all drivers, not just special groups of drivers.
- A Harris Poll found 98 percent of people believe using cell phones while driving is “somewhat” to “very” dangerous.
- A New York Times/CBS News poll found 97 percent support banning texting while driving, and 80 percent support banning handheld cell phones while driving. (One challenge is that most did not support banning hands-free phones, despite research showing that hands-free has no safety benefits. It’s very important to educate employees about risks of hands-free.)

### Tips to Build Employee Support

- **Don’t spring a policy on employees** as a surprise. This could result in long-term negativity and lack of respect for the policy.



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- Before policy implementation, **hold open meetings** with employees to discuss the need for a policy. Many materials in this kit will help you communicate. Request feedback from employees (anonymously, if that's helpful).
- When **unions** are involved, the union steward is a key stakeholder. Hold a pre-meeting with union reps to get them on board.
- Recognize that, for some employees, this policy will change deeply ingrained habits. Any change can bring initial stress. Give employees the opportunity to **discuss potential barriers**, conflicts with their beliefs and their doubts.

**Ask employees to offer solutions** to other employees' objections. This makes employees part of the decision-making, and the solutions become things they choose to do.

- Employees must see and hear that **top management supports** the policy. Employees will sense the level of commitment. If you don't yet have leadership commitment, consider delaying employee rollout until you have management buy-in. After all, management is part of the employee population.
- Employees may be concerned about job productivity – especially staff who frequently drive on the job and the supervisors responsible for their performance. Invite discussion about these concerns. Be clear about management's priority for employee and public safety, and challenge employees to find solutions to productivity issues.
- Ask employees to **share ideas to maintain productivity**. Employees will then have a plan to meet job goals without being tempted to use the phone while driving.
- Invite **cross-department employee teams** to solve barriers to implementation. Have teams share the solutions with all employees. While working together, they build and reinforce the social support for a policy.

Have a mix of senior management, front-line supervisors, union representatives and other employees serve as spokespeople for the new policy process.

- Tell **compelling, vivid stories** and testimonials about the risk of crashes. Use video and public education resources at [distracteddriving.nsc.org](http://distracteddriving.nsc.org). If someone in your company has a personal story, invite them to share it. Then ask employees to help prevent this from happening to other people.

Because many people still incorrectly believe that hands-free phones are safer, it's useful to share stories about hands-free phone crashes.



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- Involve employees in deciding how to **monitor compliance** and consequences of non-compliance.
- After policy implementation, **communicate positive results** to employees. Consider surveying impact on productivity, and share the results. The results are likely to be more positive than people expect. In a 2009 membership survey, 99 percent of NSC member respondents with cell phone policies found no decrease in productivity.

Disclaimer: Although the information and recommendations contained in this publication have been compiled from sources believed to be reliable, the National Safety Council makes no guarantee as to, and assumes no responsibility for, the correctness, sufficiency or completeness of such information or recommendations. Other or additional safety measures may be required under particular circumstances. Visit [distracteddriving.nsc.org](http://distracteddriving.nsc.org) for the latest material and updated content for the Cell Phone Policy Kit.