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## BLOGS

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# Driver Safety Programs and Distracted Driving Initiatives OSHA Pushes to Reduce the Risk of Serious Injury and Company Losses

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recently rolled out programs and publications aimed at encouraging employers to focus on programs related to safety on the roadways.

In its [Guidelines for Employers to Reduce Motor Vehicle Crashes](#) publication (Guidelines), OSHA states that every 12 minutes someone dies in a motor vehicle crash, every 10 seconds an injury occurs, and every five seconds a crash occurs. The Guidelines point out that many of these incidents occur during the workday or commute to and from work.

Employers feel the impact of employee motor vehicle crashes regardless of whether they occur during work hours or non-work hours. OSHA explains in the Guidelines that implementing a driver safety program saves lives, protects company human and financial resources, and guards against company and person liabilities associated with crashes involving employee driving on company business. The Guidelines contain 10 steps to help employers build a driver safety program.

As part of its safe driving initiatives, OSHA has also issued a [Distracted Driving Initiative Poster](#) that focuses on texting and driving. OSHA has taken the position in an [open letter](#) to employers that it is the employers responsibility to have a clear and unequivocal policy against texting and driving under the general safety duty clause of the statute. According to OSHA, companies violate the general duty clause when their policies or practices:

1. Require texting/emailing while driving;
2. Create incentives that encourage or condone texting/emailing while driving; or
3. Are structured in such a way that texting is a practical necessity for workers to carry out their job duties.

The data set forth in the Guidelines shows that driver safety policies can significantly reduce preventable crashes. It is also clear that employers have legal obligations under OSHA and its regulations to take steps to reduce crashes. Implementing a good driver safety program can significantly reduce an employers liability and costs.