

April 2023

Dear RETRO Members;

April is **Distracted Driving Awareness Month**. The [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) reports that in 2020, distracted driving killed 3,142 people.

This awareness month is an excellent opportunity to build a culture of not using mobile phones while driving, especially in company vehicles. Employees that drive distracted in their cars will typically exhibit the same behavior when driving for work.



Distracted Driving - Roadways are unpredictable and safe driving requires complete attention. Driving with a phone in hands-free mode is permissible in Washington state, but it is a distraction, nonetheless, and can take the driver's mind off the road.



Remember, **holding a mobile phone to call, texting, or any other reason while driving is illegal** in the State of Washington. It is also unlawful when stopped at a red light. Eating while driving is a dangerous practice as well.

In addition to injuries and loss of lives, accidents cost businesses in

- time loss of employees,
- increased vehicle and workers comp insurance rates,
- company vehicles being out of commission for an indefinite amount of time.

Employers should implement policies prohibiting hands-free and handheld devices while driving company vehicles. One of the best ways to prevent distracted driving in the workforce is building a workplace culture where workers feel encouraged to postpone responses to texts and emails until they have stopped moving and off the road. Remind employees to make calls before leaving the parking lot or at rest stops, but not while they are on the road.

Resources on distracted driving:

- Distracted driving videos: [RS SafetyTV](#)
- **SAFEME**'s free [Distracted Driving lesson](#)
- [RS Safety Library](#)
- Content to address [Driving for Work](#) in an Accident Prevention Plan template

Safety Meetings – Regularly holding and documenting safety meetings is required by L&I. The lack of safety meeting documentation is the **second most cited item in 2022**.

These meetings involve employees in the safety process, engaging their eyes and attention toward safety. Safety meetings are also the perfect opportunity to respond to staff concerns and follow through on addressing their input and suggestions.



RS has numerous resources on various topics to assist with safety meeting preparation. We have some excellent videos on [RS SafetyTV](#), and the [RS Safety Library](#) has many handouts, infographics, 1-sheets, and ready-made presentations covering a wide range of topics.

If there is a need for a specific topic not covered in our prepared resource materials, please reach out. Our Safety Team contact information is below.

Lock Out/Tag Out (LOTO) –

Workers can be exposed to hazards when servicing and maintaining machines and equipment, such as cardboard balers, automotive lifts, and forklifts. An unexpected startup or release of stored energy can originate from sources including:

- electrical
- mechanical
- hydraulic
- pneumatic
- chemical
- thermal
- or other sources



These hazards can lead to severe injuries when proper precautions haven't been implemented. Workers must be aware that when performing maintenance on heavy equipment, the equipment should be unplugged, and the plug should be tagged to warn other workers that it should not be plugged in. If the equipment is hard-wired, the breaker should be turned off at the panel and locked in the *off* position. If the breaker cannot be locked, it should be tagged to prevent someone from turning the breaker on before maintenance is complete. It is also important to prevent a machine from powering on while it is serviced or for pressure in a line to cause a hose to snap back while the equipment is being worked on.

Ultimately, it is crucial to make all staff aware if someone is working on a particular piece of equipment or requires repair.

Helpful resources for your safety meetings:

- LOTO videos on [RS SafetyTV](#)
- **SAFEME** [LOTO lesson](#)
- [LOTO template](#) for integrating into an Accident Prevention Plan

We want all employees to take the time to work safely! For additional assistance, please contact our Safety Team.

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