

South Carolina Department of Transportation
Engineering Directive Memorandum

Number: 45

Primary Department: Maintenance

Referrals: None

Subject: Cellular Telephone Usage

The safety of the employees of the South Carolina Department of Transportation, as well as the motoring public, is of utmost concern to the agency. Distractions during safety-sensitive work activities can create situations that may lead to serious injury or death. For this reason, the following policy is established concerning both Department and personal cell phone usage. This policy pertains to all cell phone usage, including communicating verbally, texting, and playing games. It also applies to both handheld and hands-free devices.

Personal Cell Phones

All personal cell phones shall be turned off while employees are engaged in safety-sensitive work activities. Safety-sensitive activities include, but are not limited to, the operation of off-road, motorized equipment, the operation of CDL-rated vehicles, and flagging traffic.

Employees engaged in safety-sensitive work activities may use personal cell phones during breaks and meal times only. Calls must be ended prior to returning to work activities.

Employees may use personal cell phones to place calls in emergency situations. An emergency is defined as an unforeseeable combination of circumstances that calls for immediate action and/or need for assistance.

Family members attempting to contact an employee in the event of an emergency must contact the employee's office or supervisor. The employee will then be notified through the supervisor and/or office staff.

Department-Issued Cell Phones

Employees shall not use Department-issued cell phones for any reason while operating off-road, motorized equipment. Examples include, but are not limited to, cranes, boom trucks, bucket trucks, backhoes, excavators, loaders, motor graders, rollers, and tractors. Employees must stop, secure, and dismount the equipment prior to making or answering a call.

Employees shall not use Department-issued cell phones while operating CDL-rated vehicles. Employees must stop and park the vehicle at a safe location completely out of the travelway prior to making or answering calls.

Employees engaged in safety-sensitive work activities are to use Department cell phones only for emergency or work-related issues. This includes receiving as well as making calls. Employees should wait until there is a reasonable break in the task being performed, then return the call only if it is an emergency or work-related.

Anytime a cell phone is used, the employee should first move out of the immediate work area, away from moving equipment and vehicles.

Keep in mind that Department cell phones are provided for business purposes.

Failure to follow this policy by any employee will result in disciplinary action being taken, up to and including termination.

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Deputy Secretary for Engineering

Effective Date: _____ November 10, 2008

Original signed by Deputy Secretary for Engineering Tony L. Chapman, P.E. November 10, 2008. All original engineering directives maintained by the Office of the Deputy Secretary for Engineering.