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# Supervisor Wire

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Published by CARE's WorkLife Solutions to help supervisors in their goal of maintaining a productive workforce

## Stay Safe - Focus on the Task At Hand!

Whether they make it a regular practice or not, most Americans have used a cell phone while operating a vehicle. However, many don't realize just how dangerous this can be.

While cell phone usage is not the only form of driver distraction, it can present a serious and potentially deadly danger. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), in 2008 almost 6,000 individuals lost their lives and an estimated 515,000 people were injured in police-reported crashes in which at least one form of driver distraction was a factor.

United States Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood recently said "Distracted driving is an epidemic and it seems to be getting worse every year." With modern technology, this has become an even more serious matter. Mobile devices have become more complex and require more devoted user attention and input than ever.

Distraction while operating machinery (backhoes, forklifts, cranes, etc.) can pose an equally serious threat. Focusing one's attention on a phone conversation or text message for even a fraction of a second could result in disaster.

Source: "In The Know" Winter 2009-2010 - Michigan Commercial Insurance Mutual.

## Worker Rights Under OSHA

The law encourages workers to be active players in their workplace's safety and health effort. It gives employees the right to

- Review copies of appropriate standards, rules, regulations, and requirements that the employer is required to have available at the workplace.
- Request information from the employer on safety and health hazards in the workplace, appropriate precautions to take, and procedures to follow if the employee is involved in an accident or is exposed to toxic substances.
- Gain access to relevant employee exposure and medical records.
- Request an OSHA inspection if they believe hazardous conditions or violations of standards exist in the workplace.
- Accompany an OSHA compliance officer during the inspection tour, or have an authorized employee representative do so.
- Respond to questions from the OSHA compliance officer; Observe any monitoring or measuring of hazardous materials and see the resulting records, as specified under the OSH Act and required by OSHA standards.
- Review or have an authorized representative review the employer's *Log of Work-Related Occupational Injuries and Illnesses* (OSHA 300) at a reasonable time and in a reasonable manner.
- Object to the timeframe set by OSHA for the employer to correct a violation by writing to the OSHA area director within 15 working days from the date the employer receives the citation.
- Submit a written request to the *National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health* for information on whether any substance in the workplace has potentially toxic effects in the concentration being used, and, if requested, have their names withheld from the employer.
- Be notified if the employer applies for a variance from an OSHA standard, and have an opportunity to testify at a variance hearing and appeal the final decision.
- Have their names withheld from their employer, by request to OSHA, if they sign and file a written complaint.
- Be advised of OSHA actions regarding a complaint, and request an informal review of any decision not to inspect the site or issue a citation.
- File a complaint if punished or discriminated against for acting as a whistleblower under the OSH Act or 13 other federal statutes for which OSHA has jurisdiction, or for refusing to work when faced with imminent danger of death or serious injury and there is insufficient time for OSHA to inspect.

**We Can Help - Family Problems - Child Care - Personal/Job Stress - Alcohol/Drug Abuse - Marital Tension  
Elder Care - Emotional Problems - Legal and Financial Referral - And Much More!**

**CARE's WorkLife Solutions - Services are FREE and confidential to employees, their spouses and dependents. Call Toll Free 866.888.1555 or [www.caresworklivesolutions.com](http://www.caresworklivesolutions.com)**

## Preventing Employee Theft

Theft comes in many shapes and sizes, depending on your organization and employees. Typically, though employees may embezzle money or steal products, such as food or electronics. In addition, employees may use company time to take care of personal obligations (known as "time theft"). They may use company time to look for a new job, if they are in fear of losing their current one, or may use work time to take care of personal business. Furthermore, if employees are under tremendous pressure due to an uncertain job fate, they may be more inclined to take breaks to surf the Web as a way to reduce some of their stress. To curb theft at your organization, consider the following safeguards:

### Prevention Techniques

- Communicate with your employees about the economy and how it affects your organization. Being open and honest will discourage them from panicking and resort to theft.
- Conduct internal audits regularly.
- Increase company oversight by upper management and owners.
- Reconcile bank statements immediately and consistently.
- Consider using a payroll service to ensure accuracy.
- Purchase Embezzlement Insurance.
- Consider installing surveillance equipment. Be mindful that this may decrease employee morale if they feel that they are not trusted.
- Conduct thorough background checks on all your new hires.
- Upper management may consider taking a pay decrease or not receiving bonuses like lower-level employees. Let employees know that everyone in the organization is affected by the economy.
- Give different employees different jobs, such as one person handling transaction authorizations, one person collecting or paying cash and one person maintaining records. Do not allow one employee to have too much control.
- Encourage employees to use their vacation time. If someone is stealing, it may become more evident once they are away for a few days.
- Establish a fraud hotline for employees to report suspicious or fraudulent behavior. Give them the option to call anonymously.

For more theft and crime prevention information or to learn more about Embezzlement Insurance, contact Eastern Michigan Agencies at 586.778.9900.

Source: Sterling Heights Regional Connection (2009).

## Workplace Violence Prevention

Workplace violence can be any act of physical violence; threats of physical violence; harassment; intimidation; or other threatening, disruptive behavior that occurs at the worksite. Workplace violence can affect or involve employees, visitors, contractors, and many others.

A number of different actions in the work environment can trigger or cause workplace violence. It may even be the result of non-work-related situations such as domestic violence or "road rage." Workplace violence can be inflicted by an abusive employee, a manager, supervisor, coworker, customer, family member, or even a stranger. Whatever the cause or whoever the perpetrator, workplace violence is not to be accepted or tolerated.

There is no sure way to predict human behavior and, while there may be warning signs, there is no specific profile of a potentially dangerous individual. The best prevention comes from identifying any problems early and dealing with them. CARE's WorkLife Solutions offers two Workplace Violence Prevention trainings; one for employees and one for supervisors.

### Workplace Violence Prevention for Employees

Traits of disengaged employees and their potential effects will be discussed and prevention techniques will be offered.

- Definition of violent acts including assault, criminal mischief, disorderly conduct, harassment, larceny, reckless endangerment robbery and sex offense.
- Behaviors contributing to violent actions and recognizing the warning signs.
- Avoiding conflict and protecting yourself.
- Responding to and defusing anger.

### Workplace Violence Prevention for Supervisors

This training addresses disengaged worker definitions, warning signs of violence and prevention techniques. Organization policy design or review will include documentation and threat reporting procedure.

- Workplace violence behavior definitions; physical attacks, threats, harassment, property crimes.
- Behaviors, warning signs & stereotypes.
- Causes of violence in the workplace.
- Supervisors approaches to prevention.
- Personal safety tips.
- Review of company policy

**Interested in finding out more about Workplace Violence Prevention?  
Contact Paddy Laske at 586.218.5270 / [plaske@careswls.com](mailto:plaske@careswls.com)**

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