

N.J. stiffens distracted driver fines

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New Jersey's offensive against distracted driving continues, as Gov. Chris Christie signed into law significant increases in fines for those who text & drive or use handheld cell phones. Sponsor state Sen. Richard Codey (pictured) greeted the news with tough talk: "Watch out New Jersey drivers, we're coming after you if you text and drive," Read more at <http://handsfreeinfo.com/new-jersey-tough-fines/>

NJ has revised the laws concerning texting and driving. Please read RAI's policy below.

Cell Phone/Hand Held Device Use Policy

Policy:

RAI recognizes that our employees are our most valuable asset, and the most important contributors to our continued growth and success. RAI is firmly committed to the safety of our employees. RAI will do everything possible to prevent workplace accidents and is committed to providing a safe working environment for all employees. To further this goal, RAI has developed a Cell Phone/Hand Held Device Use Policy effective 3/1/2008.

RAI prohibits employees from using a cell phone while operating a vehicle. If as our employee you choose to make calls while driving, you assume the risk for doing so.

Purpose:

Driver inattention is a factor in a majority of motor vehicle accidents. We are not only concerned about your welfare as a RAI employee, but also the welfare of others who could be put in harm's way by inattentive driving. Mobile phone and other hand held device use while driving is a common, often harmful, distraction. Effective 3/1/2008, NJ signed into law a bill which makes the use of a wireless handheld telephone or electronic device by the operator of a moving vehicle, a primary offense.

Many statistics found the risk of having a traffic accident while using a cell phone or similar device to be the same as driving drunk. **For these reasons, drivers may not use hand held devices to place work-related or personal calls while operating a vehicle while on company business.** As a driver, your first responsibility is to pay attention to the road. When driving on RAI business or driving while conducting business on behalf of the company in any other manner, the following applies:

Procedures:

Definition - Mobile Hand Held Units: Hand held devices may include cell phones, pagers, palm pilots, faxes and other communication devices.

- Allow voicemail to handle your calls and return them when safe.
- If you need to place or receive a call, pull off the road to a safe location and stop the vehicle before using your phone.
- Ask a passenger to make or take the call.
- Inform regular callers of the best time to reach you based upon your driving schedule.
- The only exception to this policy is for calls placed to 9-1-1.
- If placing or accepting an emergency call, keep the call short and use hands-free options, if available.
- When receiving an emergency call, ask the caller to hold briefly until you can safely pull your vehicle off the road.

Obey the Law:

RAI is not responsible for any cell phone/handheld device, motor vehicle violations, parking tickets, EZ Pass violations, accidents, damage to property including the vehicle or any other city ordinances or state/federal laws regarding your driving habits and operation/care of your RAI operated motor vehicle. Any tickets issued or costs incurred for any of the above are the employee's responsibility, even if the ticket/fine is issued while conducting business for our company.

Other Safe Driving Precautions:

- Use better judgment when road conditions are poor. Limit or avoid driving when rain, snow, or other severe weather conditions threaten your safety.
- Make an effort to avoid distractions such as eating, paying too much attention to your radio/CD player, or other distracting behavior.
- Do not drive if your ability to drive safely is impaired by the influence of medications, drugs or alcohol.
- Laptop computers should never be used at any time while driving.
- If using a vehicle not your own (rental or otherwise), be sure to properly adjust the mirrors and familiarize yourself with the vehicle's controls before operating.
- Be concerned for your coworkers' safety. Ask them to call you back at a safer time if they call you while driving.
- Be aware of and practice defensive driving techniques and maneuvers.

To: All drivers of RAI

This policy applies to:

- Vehicles owned, leased or rented to RAI.
- Personally owned vehicles driven by employees on behalf of RAI.

The following policy has been established to encourage safe operation of vehicles, and clarify insurance issues relating to drivers and RAI.

- All drivers must adhere to safety policies included vehicle use and cell phone/hand held device use policy.
- All drivers must have a valid driver's license.
- Motor Vehicle Records may be checked periodically. Driving privileges may be suspended or terminated if your record indicates an unacceptable number of accidents or violations.

- Should your record fall into our insurance carriers guidelines of an, 'unacceptable driver', your employment may be terminated.
- Your supervisor must be notified of any change in your license status or driving record.

If in an accident:

- Take necessary steps to protect the lives of yourself and others.
- Comply with Police instructions.
- Do not assume or admit fault. Others will determine liability and negligence after thorough investigation.
- Report the accident to RAI as soon as possible.