



Cell Phones on the Job

Cell phones are extremely popular on worksites because of their very fast, almost instant connection time. The need to communicate quickly and efficiently is necessary. However, users must adhere to the cell phone safety procedures set forth by their company.

Cell phone use at inappropriate times and inappropriate places can certainly be risky. Researchers have compared the level of distraction by your phone to a blood alcohol level of 0.08. With that level of distraction, it is easy to see how accidents can happen.

Distracted operation of construction machinery: Operators of heavy equipment, tower cranes and other construction machinery can be distracted by cell phone use. OSHA regulations forbid the use of cell phones in construction regulations pertaining to cranes and derricks (29 CFR § 1926.1417(d)), but the hazard exists across any dangerous equipment. Accordingly, active operation during the use of construction equipment should be strictly prohibited.

Distracted employees on site: Distractions from cell phones imperil employees' ability to recognize and react to hazards, such as passing machinery, which can hit pedestrian employees. Employees may already be prone to tripping on uneven terrain, may be exposed to trap hazards working in a confined space or may regularly work with hazardous chemicals. If not actively managed by the employer, phone distractions can exacerbate these hazards and expose employees to a greater chance of injury, illness or death.

Dangers of Improper Cell Phone Usage

- Cell phone usage can cause inattention on the job site
- Co-workers can be distracted by others' cell phone usage
- Inattention and distraction may result in property damage or personal injury

Avoid Distractions

- Never use a cell phone while operating equipment
- Never use a cell phone to send or receive text messages while operating equipment
- Store your cell phone in a location that will prevent its ring from startling you or anyone in the area
- Let calls go straight to voicemail to be retrieved at a later time

Be Aware of Hazards

- Do not operate a cell phone near flammable liquid



- Turn off cell phones within 100 feet of any blasting area
- Know site-specific hazard areas associated with cell phone usage.

SAFETY REMINDER

As OSHA's enforcement relating to employee cell phone use gains more notoriety, it is expected to have a significant collateral impact on law enforcement at all levels to address this hazard.