

City of Minneapolis
Request for Committee Action

To: Ways & Means
Date: 8/1/2016
Referral: N/A
From: Finance & Property Services
Prepared by: Curt Fernandez, FPS
Presented by: Ellen Velasco-Thompson, FPS and John H Scharffbillig, PW
File type: Action
Subcategory: Code Amendment

Subject:

Distracted Driving Policy

Description:

Approving the Distracted Driving Policy requiring City employees to operate safe vehicles with a heightened level of awareness and responsibility to ensure public safety, eliminate unnecessary risks while driving, and reducing the likelihood and/or severity of motor vehicle accidents.

Previous Actions:

None

Ward/Neighborhood/Address:

Not Applicable

Background/Analysis:

This recommended policy prohibits any activities which may divert the driver's attention from focusing on driving. (Examples: Reading while driving, use of remote internet equipment such as personal digital assistants or wireless e-mail; using cell phones, and looking at maps for directions). Driving employees will choose not use cell phones (including hands-free) or any mobile electronic devices while operating a motor vehicle. This includes, but is not limited to: answering or making phone calls, engaging in phone conversations, reading or responding to e-mails and text messages, adjusting a Global Positioning System (GPS) and accessing the Internet. Passenger employees can engage in electronic devices. These restrictions do not apply to calls made to report or respond to an emergency.

EMERGENCY EXCEPTION:

1. All City vehicles responding to a city emergency are excluded from this policy. Using a hand-held mobile cell phone is permissible by drivers when necessary to communicate with law enforcement officials or other emergency services.
2. The use of the City's two-way radio system while driving is excluded from this policy.
3. Commercial motor vehicles are covered under the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) rules specifically prohibiting drivers of commercial motor vehicles (CMVs) from texting or using hand-held mobile phones while operating their vehicles.

The growing use of mobile devices is of increasing concern to City of Minneapolis. Numerous studies have demonstrated how the use of cell phones and other wireless devices while driving pose a significant distraction & safety risk to motorists, their passengers and others on the road. Scientific studies have shown that cell phone use while driving increases the risk of being in a crash 4 to 5 times.

- Vehicles from City of Minneapolis departments are involved in several crashes every year (average 300 vehicle crashes per year).
- These crashes amount to over \$500,000 in property damages and injury claims per year.
- Motor vehicle accidents are costly and waste valuable tax-payer resources.
- The study analyzed the accidents reports for 2012 and the first and second quarters of 2013 and identified the reasons.
- The analysis showed that 55% of the combined causes of crashes came from 3 factors:
 - ✓ 29% from distracted driving,
 - ✓ 15% from unsafe backing and
 - ✓ 11% from failure to yield.

Financial Review:

No financial impact.

Future budget impact anticipated.

Approved by the Policy Review Committee.

Meets Small and Underutilized Business Program goals.

Attachments:

City of Minneapolis Distracted Driving Policy.