

# SAFETY COMPENDIUM – CELL PHONES & HEADSETS

## USING CELL PHONES AND HEADSETS WHILE DRIVING



In a recent fatal, Postal motor vehicle accident, one of the contributing factors was cell phone use by the postal driver. With the State of California's law regarding hands-free cell phone usage it is important to re-emphasize that cell phone usage while operating a vehicle for Postal business is still prohibited. Listed below are the official Postal Service statements regarding the use of cell phones and headsets while driving on official Postal business.

Do not use a cell phone while driving. Pull off the road to a safe location before using the phone.<sup>1</sup>

### Radio Headsets

Employees may use personal portable headsets only while seated or stationary and only when using a headset will not interfere with performance of duties or constitute a safety or health hazard. Make sure that employees do not use headsets while walking or driving, near moving machinery, involved in oral business communications, or in contact with or in view of the public. Employees must not use personal portable headsets instead of approved PPE in noise hazardous locations.<sup>2</sup>

### G. Personal Portable Headsets

— The use of headsets is permissible only for employees who perform duties while seated or stationary and only where headset use does not interfere with performing duties or constitutes a safety or health hazard. Do not wear or use headsets while walking or driving, while near moving machinery, while involved in oral business communications, or while in contact with or in view of the public.

— Personal portable headphones or headsets are not to be used in lieu of approved personal protective equipment in noise hazard locations.<sup>3</sup>

### E. Driving Regulations

#### 1. General Rules

- Never wear headphones or headsets or any other device that can diminish your hearing while you are operating a motor vehicle.<sup>4</sup>

All cell phones must be turned off before fueling, due to safety issues.<sup>5</sup>

Do not use headphones, headsets, cell phones, or any other device that can diminish your hearing or distract you while operating a postal vehicle.<sup>6</sup>

Don't use a cell phone while driving a USPS vehicle.<sup>7</sup>

### Sources:

<sup>1</sup> Supervisor's Safety Handbook, Handbook EL-801, April 2006, p.24 3-5.4y.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.71, 8-17

<sup>3</sup> Postal Employee's Guide to Safety August 2006, Handbook EL-814, p.6

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.38

<sup>5</sup> Safe Driver Training Participant Guide, Course 43513-00, June 2007, p.1-4

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p.1-5

Cell phones contribute to distracted driving. Postal policy prohibits use of cell phones while driving.<sup>8</sup>

Remember, Postal Policy prohibits you from driving while talking on a cell phone.<sup>9</sup>

### GENERAL<sup>10</sup>

1. Possess valid license - Expires: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Wore safety/seat belts
3. Did not retrieve mail from storage area while driving
4. Did not use cell phone while driving.
5. Did not use headphones while driving

### You Can Choose to Drive Safely

Despite the best written rules and regulations, in the end safety often comes down to personal choices. Choices lead to actions, and the wrong actions cause accidents.

Driving a vehicle is an important responsibility. When your attention is diverted — even for a moment — you and the vehicle can become a danger to yourself, other vehicle occupants, other drivers, and pedestrians.

People do the strangest things behind the wheel of a vehicle. Drivers have been observed operating vehicles while eating food, combing their hair, putting on makeup, reading newspapers, talking on cell phones, and drinking coffee! These actions distract the driver, who should be paying full-time attention to safely operating the vehicle.

When you are behind the wheel, be sure to focus on the task at hand — driving. Remain alert. Be aware that other drivers may be distracted. Make good choices.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p.5-3

<sup>8</sup> Driver Observation Training – Delivery Services Text Based Version course 43601-17, p.15

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p.25

<sup>10</sup> Observation of Driving Practices (PS Form 4584, December 2006)

Bolding added.

<sup>11</sup> *POSTAL BULLETIN 22219 (11-8-07)*,p.78