

December 2, 2009

Memorandum

To: All DOI Employees

From: Deputy Secretary

Subject: Prohibition on Texting While Driving

Recent deadly crashes involving drivers distracted by text messaging while driving highlight a growing danger. Text messaging causes drivers to take their eyes off the road and at least one hand off the steering wheel, endangering both themselves and others.

President Obama recently issued Executive Order 13513, "Federal Leadership on Reducing Text Messaging While Driving." This important order prohibits Federal employees from text messaging while doing any of the following:

- Driving Government-owned, Government-leased, or Government-rented vehicles (GOVs);
- Driving privately-owned vehicles (POV) while on official Government business; and
- Using electronic equipment supplied by the Government (including, but not limited to, cell phones, Blackberries, or other electronic devices) while driving.

A Federal Government-wide prohibition on the use of text messaging while driving on official business or while using Government-supplied equipment will help save lives, reduce injuries, and set an example for state and local governments, private employers, and individual drivers.

*Texting or text messaging* means reading from or entering data into any handheld or other electronic device, including SMS texting, e-mailing, instant messaging, obtaining navigational information, or engaging in any other form of electronic data retrieval or electronic data communication.

In addition, the Executive Order requires Federal agencies to take steps to encourage Federal contractors, subcontractors, recipients, and sub recipients of financial assistance to adopt and enforce their own policies that ban employees from texting while driving GOVs or company-owned, company-leased, or company-rented vehicles or while driving POVs on official Government business or when performing work for, or on behalf of, the Government. Those entities are further encouraged to educate their employees and to urge voluntary compliance with a texting ban for off-duty employees.

All DOI employees are directed to comply with E.O. 13513 immediately, and human capital, procurement, and other applicable teams are directed to update all relevant policies and procedures to include the express prohibitions of the Order as soon as possible. In addition, employees and contractors are strongly encouraged to refrain from off-duty text messaging on personal devices while operating POVs.