

POLICY SAMPLE | PERSONAL DEVICES AND SOCIAL MEDIA



Technology and connectivity are becoming more necessity than luxury. Considering that over 90% of people own/use a cell phone (and 60% are using 'smart-phones'), the impact of these devices is staggering. *Put aside the 'hands-free' while driving arguments ... there are other workplace safety risks associated with the use of these devices.*

While some of these risks might be considered *subjective* (i.e. the retail clerk that can't look up from their device when a potential customer walks through the door), others are more objective and require specific policy, practice and procedures (including reference to disciplinary policies; *which should be applied consistently and fairly so as not to discriminate against any employee or group of employees*).

Objective risks (especially in *active* production-oriented workplaces) can include:

- Worker inattention and exposure to 'struck/caught' hazards
 - Struck by moving objects / machinery / equipment; and,
 - Absent-mindedly moving into travel pathways.
- Worker distraction and exposure to 'struck/caught' hazards
 - Induced inattention during repetitive tasks ... *paying more attention to the music in the ear, rather than hands on the tools*; and,
 - Worker not paying attention to general surroundings and hazards in their immediate area ... *reduced ability to react in the event of an emergency or incident.*
- Additional 'health' hazards due to noise exposure and noise induced hearing loss from both the environment and the device (directly to the ear).
- Reduced productivity.
Use of personal devices accounts for an average of 5 lost production hours (per employee, per week) according to survey by [OfficeTeam in 2017](#).
- Reputational risks, including;
 - Customer service *deficits*;
 - General communication, including lack of instruction / awareness due to inattention/distraction; and,
 - Misrepresentation of the Company's culture or values (when posted to social media).

COMMUNICATION | EXPECTATIONS

Employers should take the time to communicate their expectations regarding appropriate employee conduct to all employees. Workplace policies should be clear, concise and easily understood.

Additionally, they should be applied consistently and fairly by the employer.

Conduct expectations can be:

- Incorporated into an employee handbook;
- Part of orientation materials distributed to new employees;
- A communications memo to all employees (via email or hard-copy);
- Written notices, with acknowledgment of receipt (to be placed in an employee's personnel file); and/or,
- Postings in conspicuous areas.

POLICY SAMPLE | PERSONAL DEVICES AND SOCIAL MEDIA



POLICY | USE OF PERSONAL DEVICES

- Devices, by definition, may include: Cell / 'Smart' phones, tablets, digital cameras (still and video), digital audio recording devices and any other devices capable of capturing and transmitting electronic information.
- Use of company issued devices should be limited to company / business related purposes.
- Personal devices should not be used for business-related purposes; unless, specific arrangements are made.
- Employees should make personal calls / access their personal device during break or lunch times to the maximum extent possible.
- Personal devices should not be connected to a company's internet connection or network(s).
- Personal use of devices, even when permitted in the workplace, should still adhere to applicable codes of conduct in the workplace (including workplace violence and harassment policies) and should be used so as not to be a distraction to others (i.e. silenced).
- The use of cameras on personal devices during work hours should be prohibited to protect the privacy of the employer as well as fellow employees.

POTENTIAL HAZARDS / RISKS

- **Struck/Caught; Inattention & Distraction**
- **Health; Noise induced hearing loss**
- **Reduced productivity**
- **Reputational; Customer Service deficits, Reduced general communication, Repetition of instruction, Misrepresentation of Company culture or values**

PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES | USE OF DEVICES

- Employees should acknowledge the company policies by 'signing off' during the onboarding or notification process
- Personal devices should be stowed / stored away from active work areas
- Use of personal devices should be limited to break or lunch times
- Use / access to a personal device (during work hours) should be at discretion of Supervisor / Manager upon specific employee request
 - *Ensure that workers are aware of company phone numbers (i.e. reception) for emergency purposes and that they are permitted to share this number with family / 'loved ones'.*
 - *Ensure that receptionists / operators are able to access employees and/or provide messages to employees via their Supervisor*
- Company issued devices should be used only in a safe manner.
 - Away from operating equipment, machines and vehicles.
 - Outside of travel pathways.

PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES | SOCIAL MEDIA

- Posting of 'content' to a social media page should be *specifically* assigned by the Company
- Commentary should be moderated by an individual *specifically* assigned by the Company
- Posting of company-related information on personal social media pages and streams should be subject to disciplinary action

The information presented here is intended for general application. This publication is not a definitive guide to practices and procedures wholly applicable under every circumstance. The appropriate regulations and statutes should be consulted. Although DeBoer Safety Group Inc. cannot guarantee the accuracy of, nor assume liability for, the information presented here we are pleased to answer individual requests for counselling and advice.

© DeBoer Safety Group Inc., 2018
www.deboersafetygroup.com | info@deboersafetygroup.com