



**Confused about why hands-free devices offer no safety benefit?**  
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## Corporate Cell Phone Policy

Motor vehicle crashes are the #1 cause of workplace death. The National Safety Council reports cell phone use as a contributing factor in nearly 1 in 4 motor vehicle crashes. When an employee is involved in a crash, it can be devastating, but employers also face ongoing liability, insurance, productivity and absenteeism costs.

NSC believes the best practice is to ban cell phone use behind the wheel, including hands-free devices. Currently, no state law addresses both hands-free and handheld cell phone use among all drivers for talking and text messaging. NSC recommends employer policies exceed state law requirements.

### Sample Cell Phone Policy

Employees may not use cell phones or mobile electronic devices while operating a motor vehicle under any of the following situations, regardless of whether a hands-free device is used:

- When the employee is operating a vehicle owned, leased or rented by the organization
- When the employee is operating a personal motor vehicle in connection with organization business
- When the motor vehicle is on the organization's property
- When the cell phone or mobile electronic device is company owned or leased
- When the employee is using the cell phone or mobile electronic device to conduct organization business

### TIPS FOR EMPLOYEES

- Let colleagues and clients know in advance that, for safety reasons, you do not answer your cell phone while driving – you can also mention this on your voicemail greeting.
- If appropriate, leave an estimated arrival time on your voicemail greeting so callers will know when to expect you.
- When traveling in poor weather, heavy traffic or for long periods of time, plan for breaks to regularly check in with callers. Pull off the road and park somewhere safe.
- Let calls go to voice mail and check in at your earliest convenience.

For more information on creating or enhancing a corporate cell phone policy, including a free Cell Phone Policy Kit, visit [distracteddriving.nsc.org](http://distracteddriving.nsc.org).



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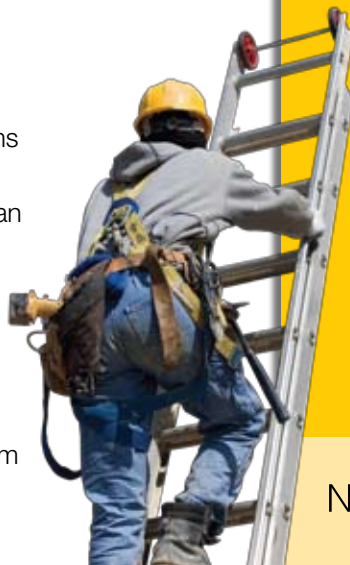
# Workplace Falls

Falls to a lower level is the second leading cause of workplace fatalities.\* Falling from a height, such as a ladder or scaffolding, typically involves head or multiple-body-part injuries and results in more days away from work than typical injuries. Workers in the construction industry are most at risk of falls to a lower level.

In comparison, falls to the same level tend to be less severe, but occur more frequently. These injuries – including sprains and strains – most often involve the lower extremities or multiple body parts. The transportation and warehousing industries have the highest rate of these types of injuries.

When performing a job at an elevated height, be sure to use the appropriate fall protection. OSHA requires employers to provide training for workers who may be exposed to fall hazards. This training must be conducted by a competent person and should address the following topics:

- The nature of fall hazards in the work area
- Correct procedures for inspecting and maintaining fall protection systems
- Use and operation of fall protection systems
- Limitations of fall protection systems
- The role of workers in the fall protection plan
- When a personal fall arrest system is necessary
- The type of personal fall arrest system needed
- How the fall arrest system works and is worn
- Proper maintenance of the fall arrest system



## REMEMBER

You are the person most responsible for your own safety. Wear appropriate safety equipment and, if you have concerns, talk to your supervisor.

For more safety tips from the National Safety Council, visit [nsc.org](http://nsc.org).

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# Overexertion

Overexertion is the third leading cause of unintentional injuries treated in emergency rooms in the United States, according to *Injury Facts*.<sup>\*</sup> In fact, overexertion injuries are the largest contributor to the economic burden of disabling workplace injuries. The most common overexertion injuries are strains and sprains, especially to the lower back.

Your physical health has a lot to do with protection against back injury. Contrary to popular belief, anyone can be at risk for back injury, not only workers who lift heavy objects. To help prevent back injuries, you must understand what causes them.

- **Poor body mechanics.** The way your body adjusts to keep its balance can be upset if you sit or stand in an unnatural position, twist abruptly or awkwardly, or lift something incorrectly.
- **Poor muscle tone.** Weak, under-exercised muscles rob the back of its support and increase your chance of injury.
- **Extra weight.** Excess weight can exaggerate the curve of the spine and strain your back.
- **High heels.** These shoes deepen the curve of the lower back and force the pelvis to make up for it by tilting backward.
- **Personal factors.** Stress, anxiety and depression can cause muscles to tighten and throw your back into a spasm.

For more safety tips from the National Safety Council, visit [nsc.org](http://nsc.org).

<sup>\*</sup>According to Injury Facts 2011 edition, based on 2008 data

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## REMEMBER

### Don't Back Down on Fitness.

The more physically fit you are, the less likely you will be to have a back injury. Take the following into consideration:

- Perform tasks to strengthen the appropriate muscles and reduce the likelihood of injury. Avoid manual tasks your body isn't used to.
- Exercise abdominal and leg muscles. The stronger they are, the less your back has to work. Consult your physician before starting a new workout routine.

### Proper posture also can help prevent back injuries.

The following guidelines can help:

- **Lying down.** Lying is the least stressful position for the lower back. Lie on your side, on a firm mattress, with your knees bent.
- **Standing.** Try to keep your ears, shoulders and hips in a straight line.
- **Sitting.** Keep your feet flat on the floor. Adjust the chair height so your elbows are even with the work surface. Make sure you have lower back support.

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# Ergonomics

Ergonomics involves designing and arranging workspaces so people can work efficiently and safely. Ergonomics is used to evaluate how you do your work to identify any risk factors that might lead to injury, and to find the best solution to eliminate or manage the hazard. Capabilities and limitations are then taken into account to ensure tasks, equipment and the environment suit the worker.

## 4 Main Ergonomic Risk Factors:

- **Environment:** Risks found within your work environment
- **Equipment:** Risks associated with the equipment you use
- **Work Practices:** Risks caused by work requirements, processes or procedures
- **Individual:** Risks unique to you as an individual, such as physical characteristics, habits and behavior

Ergonomic conditions are disorders of the soft tissues, specifically of the muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, joints, cartilage, blood vessels and spinal discs. If you experience pain or injury in your soft tissues, it might be caused by factors such as:

- Repetition
- Awkward posture
- Vibration
- Force
- Contact stress



For more safety tips from the National Safety Council, visit [nsc.org](http://nsc.org).

## DID YOU KNOW?

### Common ergonomic-related symptoms include:

- Pain
- Swelling
- Tingling
- Tenderness
- Numbness
- Difficulty moving or using an extremity

If you experience any of these symptoms, consult your physician as soon as possible. Common ergonomic problems include bursitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, tendonitis and tension in the neck and shoulders.

### Other suggestions to prevent or eliminate ergonomic risk factors:

- Alternate repetitive tasks with non-repetitive tasks at regular intervals
- Increase the number of short breaks you take throughout the day
- Consult a safety professional about your work environment
- Work at a comfortable pace

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