

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 1, 2009

EXECUTIVE ORDER

FEDERAL LEADERSHIP ON REDUCING TEXT MESSAGING WHILE DRIVING

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 7902(c) of title 5, United States Code, and the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended, 40 U.S.C. 101 et seq., and in order to demonstrate Federal leadership in improving safety on our roads and highways and to enhance the efficiency of Federal contracting, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Policy. With nearly 3 million civilian employees, the Federal Government can and should demonstrate leadership in reducing the dangers of text messaging while driving. Recent deadly crashes involving drivers distracted by text messaging while behind the wheel highlight a growing danger on our roads. 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. Every day, Federal employees drive Government-owned, Government-leased, or Government-rented vehicles (collectively, GOV) or privately-owned vehicles (POV) on official Government business, and some Federal employees use Government-supplied electronic devices to text or e-mail 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. Extending this policy to cover Federal contractors is designed to promote economy and efficiency in Federal procurement. Federal contractors and contractor employees who refrain from the unsafe practice of text messaging while driving in connection with Government business are less likely to experience disruptions to their operations that would adversely impact Federal procurement.

Sec. 2. Text Messaging While Driving by Federal Employees. Federal employees shall not engage in text messaging (a) when driving GOV, or when driving POV while on official Government business, or (b) when using electronic equipment supplied by the Government while driving.

Sec. 3. Scope of Order. (a) All agencies of the executive branch are directed to take appropriate action within the scope of their existing programs to further the policies of this order and to implement section 2 of this order. This includes, but is not limited to, considering new rules and programs, and reevaluating existing programs to prohibit text messaging while driving, and conducting education, awareness, and other outreach for Federal employees about the safety risks associated with texting while driving. These initiatives should encourage voluntary compliance with the agency's text messaging policy while off duty.

(b) Within 90 days of the date of this order, each agency is directed, consistent with all applicable laws and regulations: (i) to take appropriate measures to implement this order, (ii) to adopt measures to ensure compliance with section 2 of this order, including through appropriate disciplinary actions, and (iii) to notify the Secretary of Transportation of the measures it undertakes hereunder.

(c) Agency heads may exempt from the requirements of this order, in whole or in part, certain employees, devices, or vehicles in their respective agencies that are engaged in or used for protective, law enforcement, or national security responsibilities or on the basis of other emergency conditions.

Sec. 4. Text Messaging While Driving by Government Contractors, Subcontractors, and Recipients and Subrecipients. Each Federal agency, in procurement contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements, and other grants to the extent authorized by applicable statutory authority, entered into after the date of this order, shall encourage contractors, subcontractors, and recipients and subrecipients to adopt and enforce policies that ban text messaging while driving company-owned or -rented vehicles or GOV, or while driving POV when on official Government business or when performing any work for or on behalf of the Government. Agencies should also encourage Federal contractors, subcontractors, and grant recipients and subrecipients as described in this section to conduct initiatives of the type described in section 3(a) of this order.

Sec. 5. Coordination. The Secretary of Transportation, in consultation with the Administrator of General Services and the Director of the Office of Personnel Management, shall provide leadership and guidance to the heads of executive branch agencies to assist them with any action pursuant to this order.

Sec. 6. Definitions.

(a) The term "agency" as used in this order means an executive agency, as defined in 5 U.S.C. 105, except for the Government Accountability Office.

(b) "Texting" or "Text Messaging" means reading from or entering data into any handheld or other electronic device, including for the purpose of SMS texting, e-mailing, instant messaging, obtaining navigational information, or engaging in any other form of electronic data retrieval or electronic data communication.

(c) "Driving" means operating a motor vehicle on an active roadway with the motor running, including while temporarily stationary because of traffic, a traffic light or stop sign, or otherwise. It does not include operating a motor vehicle with or without the motor running when one has pulled over to the side of, or off, an active roadway and has halted in a location where one can safely remain stationary.

Sec. 7. General Provisions.

(a) Nothing in this order shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect or alter:

(i) Authority granted by law or Executive Order to an agency, or the head thereof;

- (ii) Powers and duties of the heads of the various departments and agencies pursuant to the Highway Safety Act of 1966, as amended, 23 U.S.C. 402 and 403, section 19 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, as amended, 29 U.S.C. 668, sections 7901 and 7902 of title 5, United States Code, or the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended, 40 U.S.C. 101 et seq.;
- (iii) Rights, duties, or procedures under the National Labor Relations Act, 29 U.S.C. 151 et seq.;
- or
- (iv) Functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budgetary, administrative, or legislative proposals.
- (b) This order shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.
- (c) This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity, by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

BARACK OBAMA

THE WHITE HOUSE,
October 1, 2009.