|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Approval: | /S/ Dani Cook | Effective Date: | 8/16/2022 |

POLICY: The purpose of this Distracted Driving Prevention Policy is to establish policy and procedures for employees of Exceptional Foresters Inc (EFI) regarding the use of wireless voice/data communications devices (company or privately-owned) when operating EFI vehicles or operating a private vehicle while the employee is on shift or is conducting official agency business.

The use of handheld mobile communications technologies has proliferated in recent years, and some drivers continue to use these devices while operating vehicles. The use of electronic devices while driving is highly distracting and is associated with increased crash risk, similar to the elevated crash risk of alcohol-impaired driving.

**Definitions**

**Distracted Driving** – for the purpose of this policy, distracted driving means any driving activity a person engages in while using a wireless voice/data communication device when operating a motor vehicle. Such activities can potentially distract the person from the primary task of driving and increase the risk of crashing and injury to self, others, and EFI property and vehicles.

**Wireless Voice/Data Communication Device–** A wireless voice/data communication device is any device capable of transmitting and receiving voice or data communications without plugging into a wired land-based phone network. For this policy, such equipment will include, but not be limited to, the following:

* Pagers
* PDAs (Personal Digital Assistants)
* Cellular telephones
* Certain real-time navigational systems
* Smartphones and devices for voice and data, such as Android or iPhone
* Mobile Data Terminals/ Computers (MDT/Cs)
* Wireless air cards

**Text Messaging/ Texting-** for this policy, the term “text messaging” or “texting” means reading from or manually entering or transmitting data into any handheld or other electronic device,

including, but not limited to, sending Short Message Service (SMS) text messages or Multimedia Message Service (MMS) text messages. Text messaging/texting also includes sending or receiving mail, instant messages, obtaining visually assisted navigational information, or engaging in any other form of electronic data retrieval or electronic data communication.

**Use –** The term “Use” means talking on or listening to a wireless telephone or engaging the wireless device for text messaging/texting, email, or other similar forms of manual data entry or transmission. “Use” also includes taking photographs, accessing the Internet, reading messages or data files, and any other utilization of the device.

**Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of each employee to be familiar with and adhere to established EFI policies and state and local laws that deal with computers, telephones, and other wireless/voice data devices or inattention while driving, including this policy on Prevention of Distracted Driving.

**How Devices May Be Utilized.**   
Employees may carry a cellular telephone or other wireless voice/data communications device purchased at their expense or issued by EFI.

**Hand-Free Only.** The vehicular use of a cellular telephone or other wireless voice/data communication devices is permitted only when the device is used with available hands-free listening technology such as a Bluetooth earpiece, a wired earbud, or temporary vehicle-mounted hands-free technology. If available, utilization of the device’s speakerphone capability is acceptable in meeting the intent of this section.

**Manual dialing is prohibited**. It is against this policy and prohibited to manually dial calls while an EFI vehicle or any other vehicle (i.e., personally owned, rented, or loaned) is in motion. To place an outgoing call, employees shall pull their vehicle off the road and stop in a safe location or use voice speed-dialing features to avoid driver distraction.

**Text messaging/Texting is prohibited (see definitions).** It is against this policy and prohibited to use of wireless voice/data communication devices, either issued by EFI or personally owned, for text messaging (i.e., sending or reading text messages or emails or other manual operations defined by this policy as text messaging/texting) while an EFI owned vehicle is in motion or in any other vehicle (e.g., personally owned, rented, or loaned) while the employee is on shift or is conducting official EFI business.

**Voice-Activated Navigation Permitted.** The use of voice-activated navigation systems is allowed while a vehicle is moving, but the vehicle must be stopped to enter or modify the system. This type of technology shall be programmed before driving so that drivers are not manually typing or inputting information while driving.

I acknowledge that I have received a written copy of the Distracted Driving Prevention Policy, that I fully understand the terms of this policy, that I agree to abide by these terms, and that I am willing to accept the consequences of failing to follow the policy.