

# Focus.

## Safe driving is serious business.



Distracted driving is not a new issue. However, the increasing prevalence of in-vehicle technologies and the growing capabilities of smart phones and other handheld mobile devices has increased the frequency with which today's drivers are tempted to take their minds off of their driving. This is often made even more dangerous when drivers also take their eyes off the road and their hands off the wheel. When you consider

that smart phones — capable of texting, browsing the Internet, emailing and playing videos — are projected to account for more than half of the U.S. mobile phone market by 2011<sup>1</sup> and to eventually replace the desktop computer as the primary Internet portal,<sup>2</sup> it becomes clear that distracted driving, although not a *new* threat, is an *ever-increasing* threat to your employees. The fact is, now more than ever, the potential for employees to drive distracted poses an ominous challenge to any company's risk management program.

The growing level of public support for combating distracted driving can be seen in public opinion polls and in the more than 200 pieces of related legislation that have been passed or introduced since 2009.

1 Nielson Report: US Smart Phone Penetration and Projections, March 2010

2 Pew Research Center: The Future of Cloud Computing, June 2010

### WHAT CAN AN EMPLOYER DO?

Taking steps to educate your employees on the dangers of distracted driving is certainly a step in the right direction. People don't often think about the fact that each time they take their mind off the road, eyes off the road and/or hands off the wheel, they are putting themselves and others at risk.

Dedicating time in the workplace to emphasize safe driving messages through facts, communications and meaningful activities can help in the short run, but research shows the best way to ultimately change behavior is to combine education with legislation and enforcement.

*"What we have found again and again in different areas of highway safety is that education alone may have a short-term effect, but in the long run, people need to believe there are going to be consequences attached to their behavior."*

Anne McCartt, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety

