

# PLAYING IT **SAFE**

Be safe and healthy on the job with these helpful tips provided by Peabody Insurance Agency

## The Distraction of Personal Electronic Devices

*Keep focused to avoid workplace accidents*

To prevent the dangers associated with distracted driving, more and more states have passed laws banning the use of cellphones while behind the wheel. The need for such laws is a good example of the common and dangerous side effect of personal electronic devices.

Our workplace safety is built on attentive employees focused on the task at hand, and such devices can play an unfortunate role in creating workplace accidents. Too many workers think that they can safely perform their jobs while talking on the phone, texting or listening to music. Unfortunately, these actions are more distracting than most realize.

Don't let the use of personal electronic devices lead to an injury. Do your part to keep distractions out of the workplace.

### Texting

Texting combines a number of hazards. Not only are you distracted by the conversation taking place, you also become distracted by operating your cellphone. While inputting a message, it is easy to lose track of what is going on around you as you no longer have a visual connection to your surroundings. A message may only take a few seconds to send, but in a fast-paced environment even that may be too long.

### Hands-free Devices

Many people mistakenly believe that using a hands-free device allows them to safely talk on the phone without hurting their ability to carry out other tasks. While such devices do free up both hands, studies have repeatedly shown that the conversation itself is the biggest cause of distraction. Even though using a hands-free option seems like a safe alternative to a handheld device, for your own safety they should be avoided in situations where your full concentration is needed.

### Music Players

There are a variety of sounds in the workplace that alert workers to what is happening around them. Unfortunately, when you are listening to music from a personal electronic device, a shout from a coworker, an odd sound from a malfunctioning machine or the backup alarm from a truck or forklift can be easily missed.

In addition to hurting your ability to hear warnings, devices that deliver sound directly into the ear may increase hearing loss in noisy environments. Headphones can obstruct the proper fit of PPE while offering no hearing protection of their own. Also, to drown out background noise, volume is often raised above the normal listening level. This increases the amount of harmful noise you are exposed to, accelerating hearing loss.



### Others Depend on You

When you are distracted on the job, not only do you put yourself at risk, but you also endanger those around you. It's important to stay attentive and avoid distractions at work – no one wants to be the reason a coworker was injured.