

**Mobile Devices & Driving:** Perhaps it's because I am a man, and not a natural multi-tasker, but I don't think so. I think all of us, regardless of sex or age, lose at least half of our functional minds when we place a phone next to our brain while we also try to drive a vehicle. Not only do I become more stupid (as opposed to normal), but with an electronic voice emitting device plastered against my ear, I can't turn my head far enough to the left or right to check my blind spots. As my vehicle moves down the road, seemingly without much intervention from me as I concentrate on the call, more often than not I get to my destination and remember little if anything about the drive. I've often pondered, "How did I get here?" Scary! Researchers call this "Inattention Blindness".

In fact, the numbers of fatalities involving mobile devices are climbing too fast, regardless of the age of the drivers. The Department of Transportation reports that 5,870 people were killed and 515,000 were injured in 2009 in crashes involving one or more distracted drivers, often involving mobile devices or cell phones.

In Minnesota, it is illegal for any driver to text, access the web or email using a wireless communication device while driving or while in traffic, even if just sitting idle. These are considered primary offenses, which means you may be pulled over and ticketed if caught violating this law. Devices like GPS (or if over 18) Blue-

tooth that are permanently attached to your vehicle are exempt from this law.

As an employer who provides or pays for mobile access for your employees, not to mention one who expects employees to reply when called, texted or emailed, and to be on that scheduled teleconference later today, what is the employer's liability, both legally and ethically? The issue of employer liability is evolving through developing case law as an increasing number of lawsuits are triggering both state and national attention to the dangers of distracted driving.

**ExxonMobil bars  
employees from  
using mobile  
devices while  
driving on  
company  
business.**

Consider developing a policy on mobile device use while operating motor vehicles or machinery of any kind. If you have an employee assistance program (EAP), they may be able to offer suggestions on developing such a policy, not only for mobile device users, but for helping shape managers expectations on spontaneously reaching out to their employees.

As for me, hands-free seems to make me less stupid than holding the phone to my head, but I've decided that dialing, texting, emailing and reading can all wait until I safely reach my destination.

*- Jim Sebesta*

**Stretch of the Month: Quadriceps (standing)**  
**Bob Seeds, P.T., PhD.**

Walking is great for the cardiovascular system but for many people with either sitting or standing jobs, our legs can complain if they are not accustomed to it. The hip flexors and one of the quadriceps muscles get pretty tight across the front of our hips.

To perform this stretch, hold onto a solid object to help keep your balance and grab one of your ankles. Gently, pull your foot towards your posterior hip and hold it for a count of 5. Only go as far as the stretching muscle or bending knee allow, and stop if it hurts. Turn and repeat the stretch with the other leg.



## On-site wellness and health promotion resource:

TCOHR strives to be true to our occupational medicine model, so our resources are focused largely on delivering in-clinic services. We recognize however, the growing demand for on-site health and wellness programs. After meeting with a number of companies that provide such services, we have partnered with HealthSource Solutions (formerly a Park Nicollet program) to help offer wellness programs to our employer clients. The services they offer are first-rate and compliment and expand upon the services TCOHR can offer.

Programs include health assessments, glucose & cholesterol screening, blood pressure, body mass index, and behavior change campaigns with creative programs such as Activity Bingo or A New Way, just two examples of their many programs aimed at physical activity, nutrition, weight management and wellness education.

HealthSource Solutions is also a provider of QUITPLAN, an onsite small group tobacco cessation program at no-cost to Minnesota employers.

Please feel free to reach out to Scott Landy at (763) 287-0740 or visit their web site: [www.healthsource-solutions.com](http://www.healthsource-solutions.com)

## Workplace Drug Testing (non-DOT) Policy Resources:

Employers considering drug and alcohol testing programs have many options these days. While many employers conduct pre-employment screening, a growing number also require post-

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accident (especially if employees are operating motor vehicles or machinery) and reasonable suspicion testing.

Drug test options include instant or rapid tests, where negative results are available to employers within an hour of the test, and lab-based tests which can screen for a wider array of substances.

Employees who are taking prescription medications at the recommended dosage will be cleared after the test results are matched with the prescription by a Medical Review Officer (MRO).

While setting up a drug testing account takes only a few minutes, employers should have, and then communicate their Drug Free Workplace policy which needs to explain the policies of when a test will be required, and what happens if test results come back positive.

<http://www.dol.gov/elaws/drugfree.htm>

From the link above, Drug-Free Workplace Advisor assists employers in tailoring drug-free workplace policies and provides guidance on how to develop comprehensive workplace programs. It also provides information about the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988.

The link below offers a range of very useful resources, developed by the U.S. Department of Labor's Working Partners for an Alcohol- and Drug-Free Workplace program.

<http://www.dol.gov/workingpartners/>

Make the best use of your employee's time.  
We see patients in the following order:  
#1 Injuries, #2 Scheduled Appointments,  
#3 Walk-in Drug Screens & Walk-in Physicals

[www.tcohr.com](http://www.tcohr.com)

## Take a virtual tour of TCOHR:

Take a light-hearted, four-minute tour of our south metro clinic, located in Mendota Heights. Go to <http://www.tcohr.com/> and click on the header to take the tour.

Other TCOHR website resources include:

- A description of all of the services the clinics of Twin Cities Occupational Health & Rehabilitation offers
- Hours of operation
- Maps, Directions and links to bus routes
- Downloadable Forms including Respirator Questionnaires
- Sample reports available through our Occusource web or fax-based reporting system
- Past copies of our Occupational Medicine e-Newsletter
- Links to other great resources

## Believe it or not – Flu Vaccine Scheduling is about to begin.

We know it's early summer, but just like clockwork, it will soon be September and employers will need to decide whether to offer on-site flu vaccine clinics or in-clinic walk-in vaccinations for their employees. TCOHR will continue offering both options. Our costs and prices have not yet been established, and we will not be accepting private medical insurance. To get on our flu communication list, please email: [info@tcohr.com](mailto:info@tcohr.com) This year's vaccine will include protection against the H1N1 strain.

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