



## **Distracted Driving**

**(SAF2)**

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

At the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (RTA), we deeply value the safety and wellbeing of all employees and are committed to ensuring a safe working environment. With the proliferation of electronic device and in-vehicle infotainment system use while driving, coupled with the myths surrounding a person's ability to multitask, we enforce the following distracted driving policy.

Hands-free is not risk free. The science is crystal clear on this fact and numerous studies have demonstrated that the use of handheld and hands-free devices while driving pose a significant safety risk to motorists, their passengers and others on the road.

### **PURPOSE**

To assist employees in making responsible decisions when driving company vehicles, we have established these guidelines.

### **APPLICATION**

This policy applies to all RTA employees and to all situations involving operation of company vehicles. If a conflict occurs between this policy and a collective bargaining agreement (CBA), the CBA will prevail.

### **ADOPTED BY:**

The RTA Board of Commissioners on

### **APPROVED BY:**

Lona Hankins  
Chief Executive Officer

Effective Date:  
Date of Last Review:



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Distracted Driving Policy (SAF2)

## **1.0 GENERAL**

These guidelines apply to any situation involving operation of a company vehicle while on company time, including during meals or rest periods. "Bluetooth" (including wearable devices) or other hands-free devices are considered electronic devices and are prohibited except where explicitly mentioned below.

Employees must comply with related rules and procedures in the employee manual and/or relevant rulebook. Department managers may have more stringent requirements for their personnel.

Employees are prohibited from physically holding or using a wireless telecommunications device while operating a motor vehicle, including while stopped at a red light or stop sign. This is in accordance with Louisiana Revised Statute 32:59.

Ferry operators shall always follow LabMar Ferry Services policy regarding use of electronic devices which prohibits the use of any device, including in hands free mode, while maneuvering any vessel under their command.

Employees should notify family, friends, associates, and business partners of this company policy to explain why calls, texts or emails may not be returned immediately.

Employees shall refrain from smoking, eating, drinking, reading and other activities that may divert attention away from the task of driving.

Employees shall refrain from using an electronic device when it presents a hazard.

Employees shall refrain from using an electronic device when forbidden by local laws or ordinances.

When seated at the control of any RTA vehicle whether in motion or not, the employee shall turn off the electronic device or use the Do Not Disturb, or Silence function. Specific requirements and exceptions may apply as noted below:

### Revenue Vehicle

- Fixed Route, Paratransit, and Streetcar operation employees operating any revenue service vehicle whether in service or not may only turn on the electronic device when at the end of the line. The employee must be completely out of the control seat.



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- Company-provided electronic devices used to assist with the delivery of service may be powered on, however, they must only be used when Bluetooth is properly connected and must be used exclusively for work-related purposes. When Bluetooth connectivity is not possible, the vehicle must be in “Park” and the employee must be completely out of the control seat.
- Paratransit and other On-Demand Transportation Service Operators shall program/connect to any global positioning system (GPS), dashboard/voice infotainment system and/or Bluetooth system before departing. If adjustments are needed while driving, pull over to a safe place out of traffic lanes and put the vehicle in “Park” to make the appropriate adjustments.
- Maintenance and other employees operating any revenue service vehicle may only turn on the electronic device when the vehicle is properly parked and the employee is out of the control seat.
- Managers, Operations Supervisors, Transit Police, and other administrative employees are prohibited from using an electronic device when operating a revenue service vehicle at any time, in or out of revenue service.

#### Non-revenue Vehicle

- Employees may use a Bluetooth-connected device except where prohibited by Louisiana Revised Statute 32:59.
- When Bluetooth connectivity is not possible, the vehicle must be in “Park” and in a safe location.
- Employees shall program/connect to any global positioning system (GPS), dashboard/voice infotainment system and/or Bluetooth system before departing. If adjustments are needed while driving, pull over to a safe place out of traffic lanes and put the vehicle in “Park” to make the appropriate adjustments.
- Company-provided electronic devices may not be used for any purpose other than for work-related purposes while seated at the wheel of any vehicle, regardless of whether the vehicle is powered on or off, and then only to the minimum extent necessary.

RTA is committed to keeping our workers safe and holding our employees to the highest standard of safety. This is so important that violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## **2.0 PROCEDURES**

N/A

## **3.0 DEFINITION OF TERMS**



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Company vehicle or vehicle: Company Vehicle or vehicle includes streetcars, fixed route vehicles (buses), paratransit vehicles, non-revenue vehicles, maintenance vehicles and ferry vessels.

Electronic device: Electronic devices include, but are not limited to: mobile phone devices, electronic wearable devices, such as smart watches, which transmit any information or communications in addition to date or time, music and/or photo download devices, electronic ear devices of any kind (except prescribed hearing aids), headphones, ear buds or any device that projects sound, portable computing devices, ancillary devices associated with an electronic device, and any future devices known by other names and serving other purposes that may distract from safe working practices (APTA RT-OP-S-017-11)

#### **4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES**

N/A

#### **5.0 FLOWCHART**

N/A

#### **6.0 REFERENCES**

N/A

#### **7.0 ATTACHMENTS**

N/A

#### **8.0 PROCEDURE HISTORY**

12/15/2020 Interim Board approval granted

12/11/2020 Interim Executive Committee approval granted

2/4/2021 Final Executive Committee approval granted

2/23/2021 Final Board approval granted

#### **9.0 SPONSOR DEPARTMENT**

Safety