

More Than Half of Workers Admit to Checking Their Smart Phones While Driving, Finds New CareerBuilder Survey

-- One-in-Five Workers Report They Check Their Device Every Time it Vibrates or Beeps --

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While smart phones have made it easier for workers to stay connected to the office, they may not be a good idea for every commute. According to a new CareerBuilder survey, more than one-half (54 percent) of workers who have a smart phone or similar device said they check it when driving a vehicle. Comparing industries, sales workers (66 percent) used their smart phones while driving more than any other group surveyed, followed by 59 percent of professional and business services workers and 50 percent of health care workers. The survey was conducted among more than 5,200 workers between November 5 and November 23, 2009.

Some workers admit they may be risking safety on the road to check their phones because they feel pressured to do so. Twenty-one percent of workers say they check their mobile device every time it vibrates or beeps and 18 percent report they are required by their company to be accessible beyond office hours via mobile device. Also, 14 percent of workers said they feel obligated to constantly stay in touch with work because of the current tough economy.

In addition to driving, workers with smart phones said they are checking in with the office on their smart phones from virtually anywhere and everywhere, including:

- During a meal - 62 percent
- On vacation - 60 percent
- While in the bathroom - 57 percent
- Lying in bed at night - 50 percent
- At a movie, play, musical, etc... - 25 percent
- On a date - 18 percent
- Working out at the gym - 17 percent
- At a child's event or function - 17 percent
- At church - 11 percent

"It is challenging for workers to maintain a good work/life balance when they are constantly connected to the office, so turning their devices off is important for their health and safety," said Rosemary Haefner, vice president of human resources for CareerBuilder. "The lines between work and life can be very blurry these days - 17 percent of workers said they feel like their work day never ends because of technology connecting them to the office. To reduce burnout and avoid potentially risky behavior, workers should allot technology-free time when away from work."

Haefner offers the following advice on how to disconnect from the e-leash:

- Turn off your smart phone when driving: Not only is it illegal in many states, but using your mobile device while driving is dangerous to you and others on the road. If it's necessary to leave your smart phone on and a conference call or other urgent matter comes up, pull over to safely handle the situation.
- Set priorities for outside of work: Twenty-three percent of workers who are required to be accessible beyond office hours report that being too connected to their jobs via technology has caused issues or arguments with their friends and family. Discuss the e-leash with your loved ones so that they are aware that sometimes you may need to be connected to work.
- Have a backup plan in place: If you anticipate being needed outside of the office, plan to have an out-of-office message or voicemail up, or leave contact information for others familiar with your area of the business. That way, any emergency can be handled appropriately if you can't get to it.

This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by Harris Interactive© on behalf of CareerBuilder.com among 5,231 U.S. employees (employed full-time; not self-employed; non-government) ages 18 and over between November 5 and November 23, 2009 (percentages for some questions are based on a subset of U.S. employees, based on their responses to certain questions). With a pure probability sample of 5,231 one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/- 1.35 percentage points, respectively. Sampling error for data from sub-samples is higher and varies.

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