



June 1, 2015

## Safety Alert: Use of Electronic Devices

*The inappropriate use of electronic devices has been linked to accidents and fatalities, both on railroads and highways.*

Electronic devices such as cellular telephones, notebook computers, electronic notepads, etc. are widely used in today's culture. These devices can enhance railroad safety, operational efficiency, and communication when used appropriately, but may also introduce an element of distraction. Any distraction while performing a safety-critical task can be hazardous.

The FAMES Committee makes the following recommendations with regard to electronic devices:

- Employers should establish policies that clearly identify where, when, and under what conditions electronic devices can be used safely.
- Except as provided by employer's rules and policies, employees should not text, type, or communicate using a cellular telephone, notebook computer, electronic notepad, or similar device:
  - While driving a motor vehicle;
  - While operating on-track/off-track equipment;
  - When standing or walking foul of any track or when in close proximity to men or equipment working on or off track;
  - While performing RWP Watchman/Lookout or Flagman duties; or
  - During job/on-track safety briefings.
- When the use of electronic devices is permitted by railroad rules, their use should be addressed in the job briefing.

**All distractions, electronic or otherwise, reduce your focus on safety and can be fatal.  
This is true whether you are on or near the track or highway.  
Remember: "One text or call can wreck it all."**

**Dedication:** *The FAMES Committee dedicates its efforts to all roadway workers who have lost their lives in the performance of duty and to the families, loved ones, and coworkers they have left behind.*

**Mission Statement:** *The Mission of the Fatality Analysis of Maintenance-of-way Employees and Signalmen (FAMES) Committee is to analyze all fatalities and selected related incidents in order to make recommendations to reduce the risk of future occurrences and eliminate fatalities to roadway workers.*