United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

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Department of the Interior Guidance Release (DIG) 2010 – 04

Subject: Federal Leadership on Reducing Text Messaging and Using Electronic Equipment Supplied by the Federal Government While Driving

Reference: Executive Order 13513, *Federal Leadership on Reducing Text Messaging While Driving,* dated October 1, 2009

1. Purpose:

This guidance implements the Department of the Interior's compliance with Executive Order 13513 dated October 1, 2009, entitled Federal Leadership on Reducing Text Messaging While Driving. The Order also encourages contractors, subcontractors, and recipients of Federal financial assistance to adopt these policies. This memorandum provides interim guidance for implementing the ban on text messaging and using electronic equipment supplied by the Government while driving.

2. Effective Date:

Effective upon issuance.

3. Expiration Date:

This guidance will remain in effect until cancelled or superseded.

4. Background:

The Federal Government is taking the lead in reducing the dangers of text messaging while driving. Recent deadly crashes involving drivers distracted by text messaging while behind the wheel highlight a growing danger on our roads. Text messaging causes drivers to take their eyes off the road and at least one hand off the steering wheel, endangering both themselves and others. Every day, Federal employees drive government owned, government-leased, or government rented vehicles (collectively referred to as GOV) or privately-owned vehicles (POV) on official government business, and some Federal employees use government-supplied electronic devices to text or e-mail while driving. A Federal Government-wide prohibition on the use of text messaging while driving on official business or while using government-supplied equipment will help save lives, reduce injuries, and set an example for State and local governments, private employers, and individual drivers.

Pursuant to Executive Order 13513 (ref.: http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-24203.pdf), all Federal employees are prohibited from engaging in text messaging and using electronic equipment supplied by the government (including, but not limited to, cell phones, Blackberries

or other electronic devices) while driving GOV; and while driving POV while on official government business.

Federal contractors, subcontractors and recipients of Federal financial assistance are encouraged to adopt and enforce policies that ban text messaging while driving company-owned or –rented vehicles or GOV, or while, driving POV when on official government business or when performing any work for or on behalf of the Federal Government. This practice is designed to promote economy and efficiency in Federal procurement and financial assistance. Federal contractors, contractor employees and financial assistance recipients who refrain from the unsafe practice of text messaging while driving in connection with government business are less likely to experience disruptions to their operations that would adversely impact Federal activities.

As defined in the Executive Order, you are "texting" or "text messaging" if you are "reading from or entering data into any handheld or other electronic device, including for the purpose of Short Message Service (SMS) texting, e-mailing, instant messaging, obtaining navigational information, or engaging in any other form of electronic data retrieval or electronic data communication." You are "driving" if you are operating a motor vehicle on a roadway. "Driving" includes times when you are temporarily stationary because of traffic congestion, a traffic signal or stop sign, other traffic control device, or otherwise.

Exemption:

Department of the Interior employees engaged in or charged with protective, law enforcement, national security responsibilities, or other emergency conditions should use the utmost discretion when text messaging while in the performance of such official duties.

5. Required Actions:

Include the following language in solicitations or amendments to solicitations, announcements, and award agreements issued after the date of this memorandum:

Prohibition on Text Messaging and Using Electronic Equipment Supplied by the Government while Driving

Executive Order 13513, *Federal Leadership On Reducing Text Messaging While Driving,* was signed by President Barack Obama on October 1, 2009 (ref.: http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-24203.pdf). This Executive Order introduces a Federal Government-wide prohibition on the use of text messaging while driving on official business or while using Government-supplied equipment. Additional guidance enforcing the ban will be issued at a later date. In the meantime, please adopt and enforce policies that immediately ban text messaging while driving company-owned or -rented vehicles, government-owned or leased vehicles, or while driving privately owned vehicles when on official government business or when performing any work for or on behalf of the government.

The Office of the Acquisition and Property Management will issue additional policies and procedures on implementing the Executive Order in the Department of the Interior Acquisition Regulation.

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cc: Bureau Procurement Chiefs
Financial Assistance Communication Liaisons