

MAFES Dawg Tracks



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Cell Phones & Vehicular Driving



According to the Cellular Telecommunications & Internet Association (CTIA), as of February, 2008, there were 254 million cell phone subscribers. Compare that to 4.3 million in 1990. Another research study revealed that the use of a cell phone while driving increased the risk of an accident four-fold. Still another study states that the use of a cell phone while driving increases the risk of an accident by 34%. It is common knowledge that the number one cause of work-related accidents is vehicles. Cell phone related accidents make up a fair amount of these accidents.

There are two main dangers associated with cell phone use and driving, including text messaging. There are people taking their eyes off the road while dialing a number, and talking while driving and getting so engrossed in the conversation that they lose their driving concentration. This will jeopardize the lives of the occupants of the vehicle.

In January of 2007, Nationwide Mutual Insurance Co. released a survey that showed that out of 1200 drivers, 73% of these folks talked on cell phones while driving. The highest use was among young drivers. This study conducted by the Institute of Highway Safety in Perth, Australia also revealed that changing to hands-free installations doesn't mean that it will reduce the results.

REPORTED HAZARDS ASSOCIATED WITH CELLULAR PHONES:

- Users are said to be distracted from defensive driving practices and less responsive to highway traffic situations. When they do react, their responsive time is said to be longer.
- People on the phone are more likely to have intense conversations that involve problem-solving - which is more distracting than "shooting the breeze" with a passenger.

- Passengers in the car often alert drivers to dangerous situations and stop talking at such times, in contrast to someone on the other end who is unaware of the traffic situation.
- Cell phone users may be concentrating on dialing a number or handling the equipment and fail to notice a stop light, traffic sign, or a vehicle in front of them.
- Not only the driver on the phone, but other drivers on the roadway, is at increased risk if a cell phone user is the ultimate cause of the accident.

SAFETY REMINDERS FOR CELL PHONE USERS:

- Keep conversations short and sweet. Develop ways to get free of long-winded friends and associates while on the road. Don't use the cell phone for social visiting.
- Hang up in tricky traffic situations-without warning if necessary. Safe driving takes precedence over telephone etiquette. You can explain later - you're still alive.
- Resist dialing a number while on the move in heavy traffic whenever possible; wait until you are at a traffic light or stop sign.
- Keep even more distance between you and the car ahead of you than normally recommended.
- Consider using a "hands-free" speakerphone system so you can keep your hands on the wheel and your eyes on the road and still keep talking. These speakerphones are available for many popular telephone models. Some states have proposed legislation that require their use.

All drivers, regardless of vehicle type, are at risk of having an accident before, after or during work time and the use of cell phones increases this risk. Concentrate on the above reminders or safety tips - Don't become a statistic!

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SAFETY -

YOU DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

BEFORE YOU START -

BE SAFETY SMART!