

Driving – Using Cellular Telephones and Other Devices Fact Sheets



DOES USING A CELLULAR TELEPHONE WHILE DRIVING CAUSE MORE INCIDENTS?

What skills does a driver use?

Skills needed by a driver include:

Skill	Examples
Visual (Seeing)	• watching the road (in front and around the vehicle) • using mirrors, shoulder checks • checking gauges, speedometer, etc.
Auditory (Listening)	• squealing of brakes • the sirens of an emergency vehicle • vehicle sounds
Biomechanical ('Doing', Activity, Hand-eye coordination)	• turning the steering wheel • activating signals, headlights, horn, etc. • pressing the accelerator, brakes, clutch
Cognitive (Thinking)	• anticipating any future movements • assessing situations such as movement of other vehicles, weather conditions, etc. • preparing to avoid hazards

Visual – locating correct buttons, scanning screen
To use a cellular telephone, the operator also needs all of these skills:

- Auditory – listening to conversation
- Biomechanical – pressing buttons, holding phone

- Cognitive – engaging in conversation

What are some common causes of driver distraction?

It is not known how much distraction a driver can “handle” before he or she loses focus on the road. We probably have all seen examples of activities that can distract drivers such as:

- Eating/Drinking/Smoking
- Reading (including looking at a map, book, etc.)
- Applying makeup, shaving, brushing teeth, etc.
- Adjusting radio/cassette/CD/MP3, DVD players, climate, or other controls
- Adjusting features such as pedals or steering wheel
- Watching a person, object or event outside the vehicle
- Moving objects in the vehicle (devices, food containers, insects, etc.)
- Talking with other people, especially if the driver turns to those in the back seat of the car
- Dialing, talking or texting on a cellular telephone, and
- Using CB radio or other communication devices
- Advanced features of cellular phones and other wireless communication devices including Internet, e-mail, fax, etc. (mobile office)
- Other wireless devices such as laptop computers, tablets, etc.
- In-vehicle navigation systems (GPS systems, etc.), and
- Night vision systems

Should an employer be concerned?

The potential for injury to employees or bystanders, and property damage to company or other vehicles should be a concern for employers. In the United States, companies themselves have been involved in court cases involving motor vehicle incidents related to cell phone usage because the employer allowed or encouraged employees to conduct business from the vehicle.

What are some ‘good’ driving tips?

Most importantly, pay attention. Incidents occur because drivers were not aware of the conditions around them. Be aware and know that distractions can come from many sources at any time.

In general:

- Be well rested.
- Do not consume alcohol, drugs, medications or other substances that may affect driving.
- Try not to think about personal or business matters, especially those that are upsetting.
- Do not use cellular phones or other devices if at all possible (including hands free devices).

Before leaving:

- Stow belongings properly.
- Adjust seat, mirrors, steering wheel, climate controls, etc.
- Select a radio station or have the music device ready.
- Plan your route, check the map or read the directions.

While driving:

- Pay attention.
- Keep distractions to a minimum (eating, drinking, smoking, adjustment to radio, cell phone use, etc.).
- Be aware of changing driving conditions such as the volume of traffic, weather, etc.
- Do not reach for items that have fallen or shifted unless absolutely necessary and can be done safely.
- Do not write notes while driving and/or talking.
- Do not glance at incoming messages.
- Be aware of other vehicles or persons who may be distracted.

DO

- Avoid using the phone or device.
- Have a voice mail option and allow it to pick up messages.
- Pull over to a safe location to make or take the call. Pull out of the flow of traffic especially when on a major highway (do not stop on the shoulder). Tell your caller you will phone them back after you have parked.
- Have a passenger answer or place the call.
- Use a hands free device when using the phone (e.g., voice activation, single touch) but remember the activation process and conversation itself is still a distraction.
- Make sure other devices are mounted (not moving around) while driving.
- Pre-program commonly used numbers.
- Pause conversations if driving conditions become hazardous (e.g., rain, snow, construction, heavy traffic).

DO NOT

- Do not participate in very emotional or stressful conversations while driving.
- Do not take notes or look up information while driving. Ask the person on the other end to make notes for you if necessary.
- Do not use the device, including the text or e-mail feature even when at a stop sign or red light.
- Do not make gestures while talking and driving.

Are there laws about using cellular phones while driving?

In Canada, all provinces and territories (except Nunavut) currently have legislation which specifically bans or restricts using hand-held cellular phones or other similar devices while driving. In all cases, drivers who cause incidents or who are driving unsafely while using a cell phone or device can be charged with offences such as dangerous driving, careless driving, and criminal negligence causing death or injury. Calling 911 in an emergency is generally allowed, but do so from a safe area.

Always check with the local, provincial, state or country regulations.

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