



The number one cause of work-related fatalities is vehicle accidents. Most companies have at least one vehicle, if not a whole fleet of vehicles, and their drivers face the hazards of the roadway day after day. In more and more companies, cellular phones are being used by construction, service and delivery personnel, as well as by management levels. Using cell phones while driving is a high-risk behavior with significant impact on crashes and society. More than 50 peer-reviewed scientific studies have identified the risks associated with cell phone use while driving.

- Drivers who use cell phones are four times more likely to be in a crash while using a cell phone. (1997 New England Journal of Medicine examination of hospital records and 2005 Insurance Institute for Highway Safety study linking crashes to cell phone records).
- There is no difference in the cognitive distraction between hand-held and hands-free devices. (Simulator studies at the U. of Utah.)
- Cell phone use contributes to an estimated 6 percent of all crashes, which equates to 636,000 crashes, 330,000 injuries, 12,000 serious injuries and 2,600 deaths each year. (Harvard Center of Risk Analysis).
- 80 percent of crashes are related to driver inattention. There are certain activities that may be more dangerous than talking on a cell phone. However, cell phone use occurs more frequently and for longer durations than other, riskier behaviors. Thus, the #1 source of driver inattention is cell phones. (Virginia Tech 100-car study for NHTSA)
- It is estimated that more than 100 million people use cell phones while driving. (CTIA – The Wireless Association reports 270 million cell phone subscribers. A Nationwide Insurance public opinion poll showed 81 percent of the public admit to talking on a cell phone while driving)
- The annual cost of crashes caused by cell phone use is estimated to be \$43 billion (Harvard Center for Risk Analysis).
- Talking to a passenger while driving is significantly safer than talking on a cell phone. (University of Utah Studies found that people age 30 and older actually have lower crash rates when driving with passengers than when driving alone.) There is ample speculation as to why this is true, but studies clearly show that adult passengers provide a safety benefit to adult drivers.

With young, inexperienced teen drivers or even drivers in their 20s, however, this is not the case. Crash rates for teen drivers with teen passengers increase significantly with each additional passenger. Distractions for teen drivers from cell phones and text messaging are also very significant. Teens are the most inexperienced drivers and also the group most likely to use a cell phone and, particularly, text message while driving.

For teens, passengers, cell phone conversations and text messaging are all high risk. That is why restricting passengers is a basic element of Graduated Driver Licensing practices and laws for teen drivers. Bottom line: Teen passengers and cell phones are both unsafe for inexperienced teen drivers.

- Many businesses understand the risk and are already taking action. Among NSC members that responded to a survey, 45 percent (651 of 1453 respondents) said their companies had a cell phone policy of some kind. Of those, 22 percent said they re-engineered their processes to accommodate the policy and 85 percent said the policy did not affect productivity.

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