

CELL PHONES AND DRIVER DISTRACTIONS

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, driver distractions are a contributing cause in approximately 25 percent of all motor vehicle crashes or about 1.2 million accidents. However, distractions can be hard to quantify, and the number of accidents due to driver distractions is difficult to define. What can further complicate matters is that there may be more than one distraction, such as eating while chastising a child in the backseat. In addition, vehicles have become much more sophisticated with options such as navigation systems, DVD players, and video games.



Cell phones are considered one of the leading driver distractions. As a result, more and more communities are placing restrictions on drivers' use of cell phones. The following tips are offered to motorists in regards to cell phone use in vehicles.

- * You should wait until the car trip is complete before placing a call. Your cell phone's voice mail feature should answer a call while you are driving.
- * Absolutely essential calls should only be performed while stopped. However, it is not wise to pull over on the side of the road, where a rear-end collision is possible. Instead, you should pull into a parking lot to perform this task.
- * The phone should be placed where it is easy to see and reach.
- * You should take advantage of speed dialing capabilities.
- * You should never drive and talk on the cell phone during stressful, emotional, or complex discussions since the risk of an accident is heightened.
- * You should consider using a hands-free cellular phone since some studies indicated that these are safer to use.
- * You should never text message while driving.

