



MAFES Dawg Tracks

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Safety Tips: Cell Phone Safety



Cell phones, being around for several years, are to the point now of being a dire necessity. When they were first introduced they were a symbol of luxury, a sign of money and success. In September, 2011, the Washington Post stated that at the present time, there were more cell phones in use in the USA and its possessions than people. In the USA, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands combined, there are 515 million people and 327.6 million cell phones in use.

In the USA, there is a big push to strengthen cell phone safety because they:

- ✓ **Cause Accidents** – At any given time, there are 800,000 American making calls, texting, or using hand-held devices while driving in the daytime. (Source: Edgar Snyder Assoc.)
- ✓ **Promotes risks of conversations in the driving mode** –
- ✓ **Distract drivers** – Cell phone use resembles “surfing” for radio stations like handling, dialing or texting and the interaction of a “2-way” conversation. Cell phone conversations take on the connotation like a person sitting on the passenger side with you. The 2nd person on your side can monopolize the driver’s attention, causing distractions.
- ✓ **Human Behavior** – This trait is identified as the #1 danger of cell phone use (getting attached to habitual use).
- ✓ **Driver Distractions** – Drivers’ education classes teach that any distraction that requires one hand on the wheel, eyes between the steering wheel and the mirror is a distraction. Changing radio stations, adjusting the mirrors, fumbling through your glove box, adjusting climate controls, adjusting seat controls, eating and drinking, making “to-do” notes, watching a video, playing with the radio, CD, or M3 player are all driver distractions.

CELL PHONE FACTS-

- California – (The largest vehicle user in the USA) – 2002 ~Reported 491,000 vehicles crashes in a 6-month span. ~5,600 resulted from inattention to driving. ~600 directly attributed to cell phone use.
- Drivers using hand-held devices are 4 times more likely to get into serious crashes - enough to injure themselves according to the Insurance Institute of Highway Safety (IIHS).
- The 30-39 year old age group had the highest percentage of cell phone use in fatal crashes.
- Approximately 50% of all drivers between the ages of 18 and 24 text while driving.
- Teenage drivers say that texting is their #1 driver distraction.
- A truck driver texting while driving is 5.8 times more likely to get into an accident than a trucker paying full attention to the road.

- Of all cell phone related tasks – including talking, dialing, or reaching for the phone – texting while driving is the most dangerous.
- A truck driver dialing a cell phone is 5.9 times more likely to crash.

There are a **few advantages** of having a cell phone, such as keeping in touch with your kids and developing good communication skills with them, as long as you don’t become an addict. It can also be a “life saver” if you are caught in a traffic jam or have an emergency problem on the highway. There are others, but these are just a couple that really aid you.

There are **some disadvantages**, such as: Folks becoming addicts to the videos, texting, and other things, causing them to lose productive time - spending untold hours on the phone. Possible health concerns are living in the area of a tower for your life and receiving the electromagnetic waves that the tower gives off. Studies are in the process of confirming that continuous exposure might cause cancer problems.

CELL PHONE SAFETY TIPS:

Check out these safety tips which can make your day a little better and your life a little easier:

- ✓ Try to make your calls while your vehicle is stationary.
- ✓ Use a speaker-phone or hands-free device. This not only keeps your hands free and your eyes on the road but frees your head from the exposure to the alleged tumor-causing radiation.
- ✓ Do not read or write text messages while driving. Taking your eyes off the road for 2 seconds could cause you to have a bad accident.
- ✓ Refrain from making emotional calls such as losing your job or deaths in the family for obvious reasons.
- ✓ If you are driving in hazardous conditions – turn off your phone and don’t take or send any messages.
- ✓ Program your most used numbers on “speed dial” for easy access.
- ✓ Program 9-1-1 in your phone for possible emergency use.

CAN CELL PHONES CAUSE ACCIDENTS AT GAS STATIONS?

Oil companies and research groups have done their homework but have no real proof that cells cause explosions at the pump. All the articles that I have read refer back to static electricity as opposed to cell phones. The theory of static electricity covers many suspect areas, such as failing to make contact with metal before removing the cover and gas cap, and the fumes from the tank connecting with the static electricity from the person causing the fire or explosions (touching metal breaks the charge). Numerous examples are out regarding fires and explosions around the gas stations with individuals and vehicles receiving injuries.