



CRIME PREVENTION HANDOUT

Cell Phone Safety Tips

It is currently estimated in the United States that there are an additional 30,000 cellular phones in use every day. When people use cellular phones while driving motor vehicles, particularly when dialing a number, they are often distracted and traffic accidents occur. At least one community has passed a local ordinance prohibiting the use of a cellular telephone while driving a motor vehicle.

The following are a series of safety tips for cell phone users:

- **Get to know your cell phone** and its features such as speed dial and redial. Carefully read your instruction manual and learn to take advantage of features most phones offer including automatic redial and memory dial - most phones can store up to 99 numbers in memory dial. Also, work to memorize the phone keypad so you can use the speed dial function without taking your attention off the road.
- **Use hands free devices.** A number of hands free cell phone accessories are readily available today. Whether you choose an installed mounted device for your phone or a speakerphone accessory, take advantage of these devices if available to you.
- **Position your phone within easy reach.** Make sure you place your cell phone within easy reach and where you can grab it without removing your eyes from the road. If you get an incoming call at an inconvenient time, let your voice mail answer it for you.
- **Suspend conversation during hazardous conditions or situations.** Let the person you are speaking to know you are driving; if necessary, suspend the call in heavy traffic or hazardous weather conditions. Rain, sleet, snow and ice can be hazardous. But so is heavy traffic. As a driver, your first responsibility is to pay attention to the road.
- **Pay attention to the road.** Do not take notes or look up phone numbers while driving. If you are reading an address book or business card while driving a car, or writing a "to do" list, then you are not watching where you are going. It's common sense. Don't get caught in a dangerous situation because you are reading or writing and not paying attention to the road or nearby vehicles.
- **Dial sensibly and assess the traffic;** if possible, place calls when you are not moving or before pulling into traffic. Try to plan your calls before you begin your trip, or attempt to coincide your calls with times that you may be stopped at a stop sign, red light or otherwise stationary. But if you need to dial while driving, follow this simple tip - dial only a few numbers, check the road and your mirrors, then continue.
- **Do not engage in distracting conversations.** Stressful or emotional conversations and driving do not mix - they are distracting and even dangerous when you are behind the wheel. Make people you are talking with aware you are driving and if necessary, suspend phone conversations, which have the potential to divert your attention from the road.
- **Use your phone to call for help.** Your cellular phone is one of the greatest tools you can own to protect yourself and your family in dangerous situations - with your phone at your side, help is only three numbers away. Dial 9-1-1 in the case of fire, traffic accident, road hazard, or medical emergencies. Remember, it is a free call on your cell phone!
- **Use your phone to help others in emergencies.** Your cellular phone provides you a perfect opportunity to be a "Good Samaritan" in your community. If you see an auto accident, crime in progress or other serious emergency where lives are in danger, call 9-1-1, as you would want others to do for you.
- **Call roadside assistance** or a special cell phone non-emergency assistance number when necessary. Certain situations you encounter while driving may require attention but are not urgent enough to merit a call to 9-1-1. But you can still use your cell phone to lend a hand. If you see a broken-down vehicle posing no serious hazard, a broken traffic signal, a minor traffic accident where no one appears injured, or a vehicle you know to be stolen, call roadside assistance or other special non-emergency wireless number.

Reference "The Complete Campus Crime Prevention Manual" by The AEGIS Protection Group.