

Safety Fact Sheet



These programs offered by the Utah Safety Council offer practical strategies to reduce collision related injuries and fatalities on Utah roadways.

CELL PHONE USE WHILE DRIVING

Using cell phones while driving is a very 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 University of Utah*).
- Cell phone use contributes to an estimated six 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*).
- Eighty 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 (*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*).
- Many businesses understand the risk and are already taking action. Among National Safety Council members that responded to a survey, 45 percent 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.