

## Cell Phones & Texting while driving

### Current state driving law highlights include the following:

Handheld Cell Phone Bans for All Drivers: 6 states (California, Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, Oregon and Washington), the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands prohibit all drivers from talking on handheld cell phones while driving.

Starting 2010 three additional states, Oregon, Illinois and New Hampshire, joined 16 other states the District of Columbia and Guam banning text messaging for all drivers.

**Fact:** Drivers who use cell phones are four times more likely to be involved in a crash. (Insurance Institute for Highway Safety).

**Fact:** Cell phone use attributes 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 for Risk Analysis)

**Fact:** Researchers have found the risk of having a traffic accident while using a cell phone or similar device to be the same as driving drunk.

### What can you do to keep from being a distracted driver?

- ◆ Turn phone off before driving.
- ◆ Allow voicemail to handle your calls and return them when safe.
- ◆ Inform regular callers of the best time to reach you based upon your driving schedule.
- ◆ If placing or accepting an emergency call, keep the call short and use hands-free options, if available.
- ◆ When receiving an emergency call, ask the caller to hold briefly until you can safely pull your vehicle off the road.

### If you must place a call:

- ◆ If you need to place or receive a call, pull off the road to a safe location and stop the vehicle before using your phone.
- ◆ Ask a passenger to make or take the call.
- ◆ Use speed dial options. Dial the number before starting off and send the call at your convenience.
- ◆ Driving and talking on a phone at the same time is difficult. Don't make it worse by trying to read or take notes. Do pull over and stop.
- ◆ Keep calls short and factual. Emotional or thought-provoking conversations are distracting.
- ◆ It's good etiquette to ask a caller to hold until you can park, or to say you'll return the call as soon as it's safe to do so
- ◆ Stay in the right-hand lane where driving may be less demanding.

