



Bakersfield Composite Squadron #121

60-Second Safety Advisor #48

Using Cell Phones While Driving

Scientific studies, using simulators, test-track, and actual road experience, have indicated that using cell phones while driving may impair the ability to safely operate a vehicle. A report released through the National Safety Council documents the increased risk of using cell phones while driving. The scientific studies indicate that engagement in a cell phone conversation while driving significantly degrades driving performance and contributes to an increased risk of vehicular incidents.

The scientific studies described vehicle control degradation while engaged in a cell phone conversation as:

- A delay in brake activation three times longer than the reaction deterioration found in drivers under the influence of alcohol;
- A four-fold increase in risk associated with the use of a cell phone while driving as compared to not using a cell phone;
- The increase in the relative risk of vehicle collisions similar to the hazard associated with driving with a blood alcohol level at the legal limit;
- A diversion of the driver's attention and situational awareness from the driving environment and potential hazards that may unexpectedly impact safety;
- A compromise in the safety margin (e.g., following distance in adverse driving conditions) provided by a fully aware and responsive driver;
- The reduction in the ability to maintain lane position while operating a heavy vehicle and an increase in potential crash hazard exposures for experienced drivers.

Interestingly, no difference in the level of safety was found for the use of hands-free compared to hand-held design cell phones. Most cell phone calls while driving don't warrant the significantly increased risk of serious accident. While it might be a convenient time to conduct business or make personal calls, it also puts you and others around you at great risk. If you need to make a call, find a safe place to park, take a short break, and make the call. Driving a vehicle requires your full attention!

