

Protecting Our Parishes, Missions, and Schools

Cell Phone Safety

“Hello, are you there?”

Driving while distracted has gone high tech. There are more people talking on the phone, texting and answering emails while driving. Studies show that one out of every five drivers in the nation is texting as they drive.

Have you found yourself in the following situations? As you are stopped at the traffic light, you decide to read your text messages or email. With your foot on the brake pedal, you start reading your text messages, and suddenly your car starts moving forward without you noticing. Or you are talking on the phone as you are stopped at a red light, only to have it turn green without you noticing, and be reminded by the driver behind you with a “gentle” sound of the horn. Or maybe you just pulled suddenly to the side of the road to take a call and struck the side of the curb or another car. These are awkward and potentially costly situations that should not happen to you or any responsible driver.

Let’s review some statistics.

Almost 90 percent of Americans own a cell phone. A study in 2003 conducted by the Harvard Center of Risk Analysis estimated that cell phone use while driving contributed to six percent of crashes, which equated to 636,000 crashes, 330,000 injuries, 12,000 serious injuries and 2,600 deaths each year.

The study also estimated that cell phone-related crashes cost \$43 billion annually in property damage, lost wages, medical bills, and loss of life.

More recent studies suggest that it is not the act of holding the phone that is distracting the driver, it’s the diversion of concentration from the road to the conversation that is the true distraction.

Lawmakers in many states are looking at banning texting while driving. It is now illegal to text and drive in 21 states, and some other states have age provisions.

Here are some of the lawmakers’ suggestions for cell phone usage while driving.

“If they are facing a large fine, they will pay attention to it. They will be more aware of it. And most people will not text.”

“An option would be to make it like the seat belt law.”

“People are going to get pulled over because they look like they are doing something wrong.”

As a citizen, what are you doing about it? Who is causing this? Do you really know how dangerous it is to text on your cell phone as you drive? Are you going to help educate others, including your co-workers and your family? Will you make the best effort to commit and contribute to the well being of yourself, your family members, and the general public?

What should be done?

Consider following your workplace policies and procedures concerning cell phone usage while driving to and from work or driving for business purposes.

Safe cell phone usage should be practiced by stopping your car safely before using your cell phone.

Follow these same procedures as you operate a golf cart, a lawnmower, power industrial truck, or any other equipment or machinery.

Do not use your cell phone while driving.



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