

# SAFETY ALERT

August 2009

## AUGUST THEME

### CELL PHONES AND DRIVING DON'T MIX

The wireless industry introduced the cell phone in 1978. Since then, cell phone ownership continues to grow by about 40 percent per year. Currently, there are over 250 million mobile phone users in the United States who call and text on a regular basis.

Mobile phone usage while driving is distracting and distraction results in inattention. It affects the driver's ability to watch the road, leading to the inability to recognize objects encountered in the driver's visual field. When drivers direct their gaze at objects on or near the road, they may fail to "see" them when they are using a cell phone because attention is directed elsewhere. With driver inattention as the number one cause of car crashes, it is evident that cellular phones and driving just don't mix.

Almost 70 percent of American users send at least one text message every day, which explains the huge increase in the number of text messages being sent. In the month of June 2008, 75 billion text messages were sent in the United States, compared to 7.2 billion in June 2005.

A survey has found that the following percentage of individuals text while driving:

- 50 percent of drivers ages 18-24 text while driving
- 30 percent of drivers ages 25-34 text while driving
- 19 percent of drivers ages 35-44 text while driving

Although State Fleet does not have a policy prohibiting the use of cell phones in Fleet vehicles, we do recommend that you keep cell phone use to a minimum. Try to avoid using cell phones while driving – pull over to answer or make a phone call.

Below is a state-by-state chart of restrictions on drivers who use mobile phones behind the wheel.

**Handheld:** Using a cell phone without a headset or other hands-free device is banned.

**Text:** Sending text messages while driving is banned.

**Some drivers:** Cellular use is banned for certain drivers, such as school bus drivers and those under 18.

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| State                              | Restrictions                 | State                                 | Restrictions                 | State                                 | Restrictions       |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <a href="#"><u>Alabama</u></a>     | None                         | <a href="#"><u>Kentucky</u></a>       | Some drivers                 | <a href="#"><u>North Dakota</u></a>   | None               |
| <a href="#"><u>Alaska</u></a>      | Text                         | <a href="#"><u>Louisiana</u></a>      | None                         | <a href="#"><u>Ohio</u></a>           | None               |
| <a href="#"><u>Arizona</u></a>     | Some drivers                 | <a href="#"><u>Maine</u></a>          | Text, some drivers           | <a href="#"><u>Oklahoma</u></a>       | None               |
| <a href="#"><u>Arkansas</u></a>    | Some drivers                 | <a href="#"><u>Maryland</u></a>       | Text, some drivers           | <a href="#"><u>Oregon</u></a>         | Text, some drivers |
| <a href="#"><u>California</u></a>  | Handheld, text, some drivers | <a href="#"><u>Massachusetts</u></a>  | Some drivers                 | <a href="#"><u>Pennsylvania</u></a>   | None               |
| <a href="#"><u>Colorado</u></a>    | Some drivers                 | <a href="#"><u>Michigan</u></a>       | None                         | <a href="#"><u>Rhode Island</u></a>   | Some drivers       |
| <a href="#"><u>Connecticut</u></a> | Handheld, text, some drivers | <a href="#"><u>Minnesota</u></a>      | Text, some drivers           | <a href="#"><u>South Carolina</u></a> | None               |
| <a href="#"><u>Delaware</u></a>    | Text, some drivers           | <a href="#"><u>Mississippi</u></a>    | None                         | <a href="#"><u>South Dakota</u></a>   | None               |
| <a href="#"><u>D.C.</u></a>        | Handheld, text, some drivers | <a href="#"><u>Missouri</u></a>       | None                         | <a href="#"><u>Tennessee</u></a>      | Some drivers       |
| <a href="#"><u>Florida</u></a>     | None                         | <a href="#"><u>Montana</u></a>        | None                         | <a href="#"><u>Texas</u></a>          | Text, some drivers |
| <a href="#"><u>Georgia</u></a>     | Some drivers                 | <a href="#"><u>Nebraska</u></a>       | Text, some drivers           | <a href="#"><u>Utah</u></a>           | Handheld           |
| <a href="#"><u>Hawaii</u></a>      | None                         | <a href="#"><u>Nevada</u></a>         | None                         | <a href="#"><u>Vermont</u></a>        | None               |
| <a href="#"><u>Idaho</u></a>       | None                         | <a href="#"><u>New Hampshire</u></a>  | Some drivers                 | <a href="#"><u>Virginia</u></a>       | Text, some drivers |
| <a href="#"><u>Illinois</u></a>    | Some drivers                 | <a href="#"><u>New Jersey</u></a>     | Handheld, text, some drivers | <a href="#"><u>Washington</u></a>     | Handheld, text     |
| <a href="#"><u>Indiana</u></a>     | None                         | <a href="#"><u>New Mexico</u></a>     | Handheld                     | <a href="#"><u>West Virginia</u></a>  | Text, some drivers |
| <a href="#"><u>Iowa</u></a>        | None                         | <a href="#"><u>New York</u></a>       | Handheld                     | <a href="#"><u>Wisconsin</u></a>      | None               |
| <a href="#"><u>Kansas</u></a>      | None                         | <a href="#"><u>North Carolina</u></a> | Text, some drivers           | <a href="#"><u>Wyoming</u></a>        | None               |

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