

Should Cell Phone Use While Driving Be Banned?

During your next car ride, pay attention to how many drivers you see talking on a cell phone. I guarantee that what you see will disturb you. An article in *CQ Researcher* states, “more than 111 million Americans use mobile phones—more than one-third of the population.” These occupied drivers are increasing their risks of crashing at least six- to nine-fold. Numerous accidents have caused Americans to wonder, “Should talking on a cell phone while driving be banned?” In order to decrease the number of car accidents in America, people need to stop talking on their phones while driving.

According to *Newsweek*, collision rates for drivers using hand-held cell phones match the rates for drivers who are legally drunk. Holding a cell phone, having a conversation, steering a wheel, and concentrating on a road are too many tasks to juggle. A driver needs to fully concentrate on the road and prepare for obstacles such as pedestrians or sudden traffic. In 1999, a motorist dialing a cell phone lost control of her car and hit a toddler. Ryan Duffner was out walking the family dog with his mother in Lawrenceville, Georgia when his life tragically ended. A study conducted by the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society found that “cell phone distraction causes 2,600 deaths and 330,000 injuries in the United States every year.” If only those drivers had parked or waited to make those calls, little Ryan Duffner as well as thousands of others would still be alive today. In

order to help eliminate these accidents, laws need to be enacted and enforced.

Handling a cell phone while driving has proven to be increasingly dangerous, yet people continue to do it. The government needs to get involved. The fear of receiving an outrageous fine will force people to stop talking on a cell phone while driving. "If the government sees the need to make more stringent efforts and issue more tickets [for distracted cell phone driving], we will. We did it for seatbelts, and no one thought it was important. But it saved lives," says Brian Walsh, a police official. Concentrating on the road is just as important as wearing a seatbelt. More Americans are realizing this important fact. Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and the District of Columbia have already banned cell phone use while driving. The rest of the country, however, still needs convincing. Some foolish people still oppose these laws.

Jim Wolf believes that if the government bans talking on a cell phone while driving, they should ban changing radio stations, drinking a soda, and eating while driving as well. "Distraction is a serious concern, but I don't think it's substantially changed because of the cell phone," comments Jim. The research of Dr. David Strayer, a professor at the University of Utah, proves Jim wrong. According to him, "carrying on a conversation requires much more attention than passively listening to the radio or sipping a soda." It is a far more interactive activity and takes a lot more time. In Michigan alone, cellular phones contributed to 879 accidents in 2003; this proves that cell phones are a substantially great distraction on the road.

Banning cellphone use while driving will save lives and reduce the number of accidents in this country. That is what matters. Australia, China, Kenya, Russia, and many other countries have already realized this. When will America?