



National Safety Council

Position/Policy Statement

Cell Phone and Text Messaging Restrictions

The National Safety Council believes that it is the primary responsibility of the driver to operate a vehicle safely. Cognitive distraction occurs when a driver is concentrating on tasks other than a driving task. This activity degrades the driver's performance. Consequently, all drivers should refrain from using cell phones (including hands-free units) and text messaging devices while driving. NSC recommends state laws banning the use of cell phones (including hands-free units) and text messaging devices while driving. NSC further believes that for a ban to be effective, a combination of public education, effective laws and a strong, visible and ongoing enforcement component must also be implemented. Further, NSC recommends that:

- 1) Employers issue written company policies that prohibit all employees from using such devices, with or without hands-free units, while driving on company business, except in emergency situations. All employers should establish written policies supporting the ban on such devices.
- 2) The company policy should also educate employees to the risks associated while driving and utilizing wireless devices. NSC further recommends that all employers re-evaluate their business practices and re-engineer their processes to maximize compliance with the policy.
- 3) NSC calls on the scientific, traffic safety and law enforcement communities to continue to identify ways to collect relevant data and document and evaluate the effectiveness of related laws. The NSC recognizes that strong laws, visibly enforced, are the strongest deterrents to unsafe behavior on streets and highways. The NSC is also concerned that some laws (such as hands-free laws) may not reduce crashes or injuries and can be counter-productive if these laws result in an increase in the number of calls motorists engage in while driving. Any increase in cell phone/text messaging use while driving will increase exposure to the hazard of distracted driving and will increase crashes and injuries.

This position statement reflects the opinions of the National Safety Council but not necessarily those of each member organization.

Approved, October 7, 2008