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Move On To End Phone Use While Driving

Feds Announce Formation Of New Safety Group

POSTED: 7:08 am EST January 12, 2010
 UPDATED: 7:43 am EST January 12, 2010

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BOSTON -- You've seen it, and maybe you've done it yourself once or twice.

Now there's a new push to get you to put down the cell phone and watch the road following the release of some startling new numbers on just how many crashes involve cell phone use.

Researchers said if you talk or text while driving, you are four times more likely to be involved in a crash

on the road.

On Tuesday, the [U.S. Department of Transportation](#) and the National Safety Council will be announcing the formation of a new group called [FocusDriven](#), a non-profit group similar to Mothers Against Drunk Driving, which will aim to discourage talking and texting behind the wheel.

Doing so is not illegal in the Bay State yet, but many are pushing for tighter restrictions, especially for teenagers.

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"Your basic immaturity and the false sense of invincibility is all too often a deadly combination behind the wheel," said Jennifer Smith, president of FocusDriven.

Smith's mother was killed in 2008 when her car was hit by a car driven by a woman who ran a red light while talking on a cell phone.

"We need to treat this as a public health emergency," Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said.

The group has released some grim numbers, its research indicating that cell phones cause 1.6 million crashes every year, with just over 1.5 million talking on the phone and 200,000 texting. Federal officials estimated in 2007 that 11 percent of drivers talk on cell phones.

It is difficult to report hard numbers on accidents caused by drivers using cell phones because police in about half the U.S. do not collect such data.

Previous Stories:

- December 17, 2009: [Boston Council OKs Driving, Texting Ban](#)
- October 7, 2009: [1 Out Of 3 Bostonians Pick Cell Phone Over Sex](#)
- June 11, 2009: [Handheld Phone, Texting And Driving Ban?](#)
- June 11, 2009: [Beacon Hill To Consider Texting-Driving Ban](#)

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- [May 20, 2009: Survey: 1 In 4 Cell Phone Users Text While Driving](#)

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Gotta hand it to Mass politicians.....where are their priorities ?? Gotta be first for gay marriage, drag their butts on elderly drivers and cell phones, which are FAR more important to Mass voters than Chad marrying Cliff.....

Jan. 12, 2010 9:00am EST | from [ihatesummertime](#)

[Inappropriate](#)

So now the govt is finally caught up with the rest of the world...isn't that amazing ? For 3-4 years now I've been swearing at the morons on cell phones yakkin and paying no attention....NOW the govt says it's dangerous...make me wonder..are these idjits on cell phones govt employees? They act like it....

Jan. 12, 2010 8:51am EST | from [BillKist](#)

[Inappropriate](#)

it should be against the law along with wearing hoods while driving. i have been almost sideswiped i don't know how many times by people texting and talking. as far as the hoods how can they see whats going on either side of them. FYI don't have a cell phone yet but will not talk & drive!!

Jan. 12, 2010 8:33am EST | from [chmb1b](#)

[Inappropriate](#)

yeah, i can't drive three miles from work to home without seeing half a dozen bone head moves. In all cases, the driver is on the phone. In all fairness, this law should be passed along with some controls/ evaluation of elderly drivers.

Jan. 12, 2010 8:27am EST | from [buchanan65](#)

[Inappropriate](#)

about time. why dont the auto industry put jammers in the new cars while driving?

Jan. 12, 2010 8:03am EST | from [funinmass](#)

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