



# Rutgers Environmental Health and Safety



## Driving Safety and Cell Phone Use

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A driver's primary responsibility is the safe operation of the vehicle. In the U.S., a motor vehicle death occurs every 12 minutes; a disabling injury occurs every 13 seconds. According to the National Safety Council (NSC), 46,200 people died and 2,400,000 people suffered disabling injuries from automobile accidents in 2004.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), driver distraction (i.e. talking on a cell phone, eating, drinking, applying cosmetics, etc.) was a contributing cause in 20-30% of all accidents. In recent years, the number of drivers using cell phones while driving has substantially increased. According to the NHTSA:

- 75% of all drivers reported using their cell phone while driving
- 10% of all drivers are using their cell phones while driving in the daytime. This means that 974,000 drivers are using a cell phone at any given time.

Several studies have shown that:

- Cell phone users are 4 times as likely to be involved in crashes
- Cell phone use caused far more crashes than other types of distractions
- Risks are the same whether using hand-held or hands-free devices
- Cell phone users are twice as likely to miss signals and took longer to react to the signals that were detected



the increase use of cell phones, the following has occurred:

- A few states, including New Jersey, passed legislation banning the use of hand-held devices
- Other states have passed or have legislation pending to ban cell phone use among teenagers
- Several employers have been sued for accidents caused by employees using cell phones
- The NSC has recommended (as a best practice) that electronic devices not be used while driving

How can you be a safe driver?

- Ensure that your vehicle is in good working order (i.e. brakes, tires, lights, etc.)
- Buckle up and ensure children are in appropriate child safety seats. You can have your child safety seat checked and receive educational materials at designated locations throughout the state, including the Middlesex County Child Safety Seat Inspection Station on the Rutgers campus at:



- Emergency Services, Fire Station -129 Davidson Rd., Piscataway, NJ  
Hours of operation: 7-11 am, Wednesdays and Thursdays  
For information call (732) 745-4097

- For additional locations, please visit: <http://www.state.nj.us/oag/hts/childseats/childseatchecks.html>
- Don't drink and drive
- Avoid distractions, such as talking on your cell phone, drinking, eating, etc.
- Don't use cell phone while driving. If you need to use the phone, pull over in a safe spot, i.e. parking lot or rest area.
- Follow all regulations and posted signs, be courteous, be aware of surroundings, and drive defensively



- Take a defensive driving course. You are required to attend the Rutgers Defensive Driving Course if operating a University vehicle. For details, please visit the Emergency Services website at: <http://rues.rutgers.edu/dd.html>.
- Use appropriate precautions while driving in inclement weather

For additional information, please visit the following websites:

- National Safety Council at: <http://www.nsc.org>
- New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety at: <http://www.state.nj.us/oag/hts/>
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration at: <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/>

Because of the safety concerns with