

## Cell Phone Safety Concerns

Every day in 2008, over 800,000 people were texting, making calls, or using a handheld cell phone while driving in the United States. With distracted driving killing nearly 6,000 Americans in the same year, it's no mystery that cell phone use is risky for drivers.

Use of cell phones while driving is an ever-increasing cause of car accidents in Arizona and across the country. According to an estimate by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), cell phone distraction plays a role in 2,600 deaths and 330,000 injuries per year. In addition, studies have shown that drivers talking on a cell phone are less capable than drunk drivers with a blood-alcohol content of 0.08.

Drivers using their cell phones are a menace to all other motorists on the road, but they present an especially large danger for motorcyclists. The leading cause of car-motorcycle accidents is inattentive drivers not seeing the motorcycle and failing to yield the right of way. This failure to see the motorcyclist is a problem even when drivers are not distracted, but distractions such as cell phones increase the risk of not seeing a motorcyclist exponentially.

- Despite the risks, the majority of teen drivers ignore [cell phone driving restrictions](#).
- In 2007, driver distractions, such as using a cell phone or text messaging, contributed to nearly 1,000 crashes involving 16- and 17-year-old drivers.
- Over 60 percent of American teens admit to risky driving, and nearly half of those that admit to risky driving also admit to [text messaging behind the wheel](#).
- Each year, 21% of fatal car crashes involving teenagers between the ages of 16 and 19 were the result of cell phone usage. This result has been expected to grow as much as 4% every year.
- Almost 50% of all drivers between the ages of 18 and 24 are [texting while driving](#).
- Over one-third of all young drivers, ages 24 and under, are texting on the road.
- Teens say that texting is their number one [driver distraction](#).
- Talking on a cell phone causes nearly 25% of car accidents.
- Teen drivers are four times more likely than adults to get into car crashes or near crash events directly related to talking on a cell phone or texting.
- From 2003 to 2006, [car accidents from cell phone use](#) lead to 50 deaths across the state of Pennsylvania.

➤ For every 6 seconds of drive time, a driver sending or receiving a text message spends 4.6 of those seconds with their eyes off the road. This makes texting the most distracting of all cell phone related tasks.

1. Look for slow moving cars
2. Be aware of cars swerving back and forth.
3. Be careful when approaching lights and stop signs.
4. Cover your rear end by looking behind you when stopped.

**The Bottom line for motorcycle operators is that we have to be even more vigilant as we are riding on the road and stopped at lights and stop signs. As if we don't have enough to worry about already, now we have to watch out for drivers looking down at their cell phones and not watching the road.**