



## ***Teen Driving and Text Messaging***

In a nation-wide survey of 1,000 16- and 17-year-old teen drivers released in July 2007, 61 percent reported engaging in risky and unsafe behaviors while driving. Some of these behaviors are understood to be unsafe, while others may not be so well understood by teens and their parents, such as driving with teen passengers.

- Of the 61 percent of young teen drivers who engage in these unsafe behaviors:
  - 51 percent talk on the cell phone while driving
  - 46 percent are text messaging while driving
    - One in three (32 percent) send text messages while driving and
    - More than 43 percent are reading them while driving.
- More than half of teens who admit to risky driving behaviors talk on a cell phone while driving. Unfortunately, holding or dialing the phone is not the only problem. The conversation itself is a distraction and takes drivers' attention off of the road and away from what they are supposed to be doing.

## ***Cell Phone Facts***

Many cell phone users like to stay in touch with friends and family constantly. That's fine when you're not driving, but it's a big concern when you are driving.

- Risk of collision increased by up to 400% when talking on a cell phone while driving
- Nearly 80% of collisions involve some form of driver inattention

In a 2003 study of 100 drivers, cell phones were associated with the highest frequency of distraction-related events for crashes and near-crashes.

A 2005 study done with driving simulators, found that when talking on a cell phone:

- Young drivers' response times to brake lights ahead were as slow as those by elderly drivers
- Drivers of all ages were 9% slower in hitting their brakes when needed
- Crash rates were more than 5 times greater than for undistracted drivers.

## ***Cell Phone Laws***

New York State

- Hands free cell phone devices are required while operating a vehicle for all drivers
- AAA supports a state-wide approach of legislation that bans text messaging, email, etc while driving
- In a February 2007 survey, nearly 9 in 10 drivers supported more enforcement of the state cell phone law, and nearly 7 in 10 supported increased monetary penalties and license points for violations.

Other States

- In 2007, Washington became the first state in the nation to enact a ban specifically on text messaging while driving.
- New York, New Jersey, Connecticut the District of Columbia have enacted bans on driving while talking on a hand-held cellular phone. California and Washington have bans that will take effect July 1, 2008.
- Fourteen states (Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia) and DC restrict the use of cellular phones by drivers under 18 years of age.