

### For Your Safety: Cell Phones Behind The Wheel

As we all know, cell phones are everywhere. They are great because they enable us to communicate with one another from almost anywhere. The problem is that cell phones can also be a distraction when we are doing dangerous tasks such as operating a vehicle. Studies have shown that talking on a cell phone while driving increases the chance of having an accident by 4 times. The reason why is that it causes the driver to lose focus on what he or she should be doing (driving). Whether or not you drive for the company, think about how much time you spend talking on the phone when you are behind the wheel. Think about how many times it made you lose your focus on driving. You may want to consider yourself lucky. **The safest bet is not to ever use your phone and drive at the same time.** If you must use your phone (and your state and company allows it), please consider these safety tips before you do so:

- If you have to make or receive a call, look for a safe opportunity to pull over and park.
- Use only a speakerphone or a hands-free phone. Make sure you put on the hands-free accessories **before** you start driving. But be aware: hands-free is not risk-free.
- Don't answer the phone until you have checked that it is safe to do so.
- Use speed dial options. If you know you will need to call an unprogrammed number, dial the number before starting off and send the call at your convenience.
- Driving and talking on a phone at the same time is difficult. Don't make it worse by trying to read or take notes. Do pull over and stop.
- Keep calls short and factual. Emotional or thought-provoking conversations are distracting. Recent research suggests that decisions made while driving and talking on a cell phone are not always good decisions.
- It's good etiquette to ask a caller to hold until you can park, or to say you'll return the call as soon as it's safe to do so.
- When reporting an emergency situation from a cell phone, pull over and ensure you are not in the flow of traffic. If you **must** keep driving, remember your primary concern is to avoid causing another emergency.

**Remember that driving is your number one priority. Missing a call or having to hang up on someone suddenly is perfectly acceptable if it means getting home safely.**

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