

Cell Phone Safety

BOHM, BOYLE & JONES is concerned about the safety of their clients. One growing cause of automobile accidents is the use of wireless technology, especially cell phones. The wireless industry introduced the cellular phone in 1983. Since then, cell phone ownership continues to grow by about 40 percent per year. By the year 2001, there were more than 90 million cell phones and 85 percent of those subscribers use their phones while driving.

The use of cell phones while driving has many potential dangers. The *New England Journal of Medicine* concluded from one study that the distraction caused by phone use in motor vehicles **quadrupled** the risk of a collision during the brief period of the call, a rate equivalent to the impairment from legal intoxication. The distraction of the call, not the actual act of dialing, impairs a driver's ability to stay focused and safely operate the vehicle.

California, Florida, and Massachusetts have placed restrictions on cellular phone use in vehicles and other states are considering adding regulations. New York, New Jersey and Washington D.C. have banned cell phones usage while driving altogether. Some states are including a question on their accident report whether a cell phone was in use at the time of the accident.

Cell phone use while driving clearly creates distractions and distractions result in inattention. Because twenty-five percent of the 6.3 million crashes that occur each year are caused by driver inattention, it seems evident that cell phones and driving don't mix. In a recent survey, 84 percent of cell phone users stated that they believe that talking on a cell phone while driving increases the risk of an accident.

Here's what studies have shown about cell phones and driving so far:

1. In crashes involving cell phone usage the majority of drivers were talking on their cell phones at the time of impact. Therefore, the conversation, rather than dialing, is the most frequently reported crash factor.
2. Some drivers were startled when their cell phone rang and, as they reached for their phones, they ran off the road.
3. An overwhelming majority of cell phone users involved in crashes struck cars or other large objects that were in clear view.
4. Manually dialing a cell phone can cause a loss of vehicle control, such as maintaining speed and staying in the proper lane.
5. Cellular telephone use while driving increases the risk of a crash.
6. As the number of cellular phones used while driving increases, the number of crashes will increase.



Should you be injured in an automobile collision as a result of someone using a cell phone, please call **BOHM, BOYLE & JONES, P.C.**

Firm announcements

CAROLYN T. MORESCKI has joined the firm as an associate attorney. Carolyn recently relocated to Arizona from Minnesota where she practiced law following her graduation from law school in 2001. Her practice at **BOHM, BOYLE & JONES, P.C.** will focus on representing individuals injured in car accidents, dog bites and injuries on premises.

