



## Focus on the Drive Quarterly Newsletter



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What percent of motor vehicle crashes can be attributed to cell phone use?

- a. 5%
- b. 11%
- c. 28%
- d. 32%

Find the answer below.

### Have you seen the new NSC Website?

As you create your [custom profile](#), select distracted driving as an area of interest. If you

*You are receiving this newsletter because you have downloaded the National Safety Council's Cell Phone Policy Kit or shown interest in distracted driving. Thank you for taking notice of this very important issue.*

### NSC and Aegis Mobility partner to promote corporate cell phone safety

The National Safety Council announced it has entered into a strategic alliance with Aegis Mobility to introduce DriveAssist™ Guardian to NSC member organizations. Hundreds of NSC member companies have policies prohibiting employees from using cell phones behind the wheel. This new product will enable employers to reduce injury risks, ensure employees are complying with policies and reduce liability. Learn more about [DriveAssist](#).

### New findings support need for a total ban

The Highway Loss Data Institute, affiliated with the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, recently released a study reporting no reductions in crashes after states enacted laws prohibiting handheld cell phone use behind the wheel. In response, Janet Froetscher, NSC president and CEO stated, "These findings support the need for a total ban on cell phone use while driving. There is a common misconception that hands-free is safer and research tells us hands-free is just as dangerous as handheld. To accurately measure the reduction of crashes, it's going to take states or municipalities banning handheld and hands-free devices and effective law enforcement."

Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood responded on his blog saying, "At this early stage in our work against distracted driving, no one should be discouraging strong nationwide efforts to make our roadways safer. When it comes to distracted driving, we are only at the starting gate. Unfortunately, a study released by HLDI casts doubt on the reality of this epidemic. Not explaining likely reasons for the surprising data encourages people to wrongly conclude that

### The Department of Transportation taking action

Last fall, Ray LaHood, Department of Transportation Secretary announced President Obama signed an executive order to ban federal employees from texting while driving. This ban involves more than 4.5 million federal employees, including the military.

A few weeks ago, LaHood also announced that the [Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration](#) will ban commercial truck and bus drivers from texting with any mobile communication device.

On his blog LaHood stated, "When we sponsored the nation's first summit on distracted driving last fall, we promised to send a clear message that texting and talking while driving are dangerous activities that must stop. And I've been working hard to send that message ever since."

The Department of Transportation has also launched [www.distraction.gov](#), housing a variety of resources to address distracted driving

already have a user profile, you can edit it at any time.

**Poll Question:**

Correct answer = c

talking on cell phones while driving is not dangerous!"

Cognitive distraction, or the mind's inability to completely focus on the task of driving while talking on a cell phone, is the reason hands-free devices are no safer than handheld. Your mind can't be used for both tasks without affecting the quality of attention on one of the tasks.

Watch for NSC's white paper on cognitive distraction coming soon.

**Policies prohibiting cell phones while driving: Not a productivity killer**

When NSC surveyed its members last fall, 99 percent of respondents with policies prohibiting cell phone use while driving said they saw no decrease in productivity. Yet, for companies without policies, productivity was the top concern.

If you have a policy:

- What did employees do to maintain productivity?
- How did management help?
- Did you test productivity with a group before companywide rollout? What happened?

We will compile answers to the above questions to share in the next newsletter. Help your peers by sharing your productivity tips and stories with Deb Trombley at (630) 775-2250 or [deborah.trombley@nsc.org](mailto:deborah.trombley@nsc.org).

**Major NSC distracted driving announcements**

On Jan. 12, 2010, the one-year anniversary since NSC called for a nationwide ban on cell phone use while driving, NSC held a press conference to make three major announcements:

**1. Current cell phone crash impact**

NSC statisticians, using an established mathematical [model](#), now estimate a minimum of 28 percent of all motor vehicle crashes in 2008 were attributable to cell phone use and texting. This accounts for more than 1.6 million crashes. While it has been proven that texting while driving is a riskier behavior, cell phone use while driving causes more crashes and is more prevalent. View our [fact sheet](#) for more statistics.

**2. The public supports laws**

NSC compiled results from 20 public opinion polls and surveys from 2001 to 2009 exploring support for cell phones and driving legislation, risk perception and behavior.

- Public support for a total cell phone ban is on the rise, according to 2009 AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety and Nationwide Insurance polls, reporting 43 and 57 percent support, respectively.

beyond texting bans.

**Does your organization want to be profiled in the next quarterly e-mail?**

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**Don't miss Cell Phone Policy Kit updates**

If you downloaded the NSC Cell Phone Policy Kit between March and September 2009, we've made significant improvements.

All materials have been updated with current science and statistics, and new pieces have been added. The kit is free and available on our [Distractions Driving Employer Policies](#) page.

**Need help?**

- Do you need help implementing a policy?
- Are you running into any challenges or barriers?
- Do you need specific info?

Contact Deb Trombley - she will answer your questions and connect you with resources.

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- Public support for laws banning handheld phones has been consistently high since 2001, with support levels of 73-86 percent.
- Current public support for laws banning texting is very high (80-97 percent), according to three surveys conducted in 2009 by Nationwide Insurance, *The New York Times/CBS* and Quinnipiac University.

Read more of the [research](#).

### **3. Survivor advocacy group formed**

NSC efforts helped create a nonprofit organization called FocusDriven - Advocates for Cell-Free Driving. Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, announced the launch of this new organization at the Jan. 12 press conference.

Founded by family members of victims who lost their lives in crashes caused by drivers using cell phones, this organization plans to mobilize others to become educated and get involved. Visit [www.focusdriven.org](http://www.focusdriven.org) for more information.

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