

Mail Call



Re: Cell-Phone Use

I don't know how to respond to your website poll on cell-phone use. Your first option talks about a permanent fixture in a vehicle. The majority of cell phones in use today aren't permanent fixtures inside a vehicle.

I also reviewed your poll results so far, and I strongly disagree with your comments. Any actions the driver engages in, other than driving, can cause "momentary distraction for the fraction of a second needed to respond to the situation" and can "make one drive erratically, causing others to take unnecessary action." Many actions other than cell-phone use can cause these behaviors in the driver and surrounding drivers, including eating and drinking, putting on makeup, shaving, reading newspapers or magazines, talking to passengers, lighting a cigarette, and turning your head to face a passenger. Mothers especially are apt to turn their head and shoulders to attend to babies or young children in the back seat.

We've all seen these activities and don't think twice about them being dangerous, so let's not focus just on cell-phone use as a dangerous action.

Margarita Davis
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Thank you for your valuable comments. You're right; any action that distracts a driver is dangerous. The question easily could have been: "Do you eat while driving?" or "Do you put on makeup while driving?" Cell-phone use is just one distraction.

I try to keep comments on the results page short, but your point is well taken. I'll add a paragraph to remind users that other actions are equally, if not more, dangerous than cell-phone use.

The quick poll on our home page is not intended to be used for statistical purposes. It's there to get the poll-taker thinking about safety. So, if taking the poll prompted you to think of all the other potential distractions that may hinder driving, then

the poll worked.—Ron Campbell, Webmaster

I disagree with Ms. Davis when she says, "We have all seen these activities (distractions) and don't think twice about them being dangerous." Everything she outlines makes my blood boil every time I see some idiot doing one of them. If these distracted drivers were endangering only themselves, I wouldn't care, but that's not the case. They're jeopardizing everyone on the road. God forbid that I ever witness a traffic accident caused by a distracted driver, because I'll take great delight in giving the cops a statement.—Ed.



Photo provided by AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety