



Short Safety Subject

Short Safety Subjects are provided by the Public Safety Business Center, Fort Bragg, NC. Our intent is to provide safety topics for the purpose of increasing safety awareness and improving safety performance. Additional Short Safety Subjects are available on the PSBC Business Management Web Site at:

www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm

Use A Car Phone Safely



Driving can be difficult enough even when you concentrate completely on the road. But driving while you dial a phone or balance it to your ear can be distracting and potentially dangerous. Car phones may be convenient for those who own them but, if not used properly, drivers with car phones are a danger to themselves and everyone on the road.

While there is no research that demonstrates that car phone use while driving increases crash risk, anything that takes a driver's concentration off the road presents a problem and increases the possibility of a collision. At 55 miles per hour, a vehicle travels the length of a football field in 3.7 seconds - less time than it takes to dial a phone number.

America's growing enchantment with cellular mobile phones in autos, vans, RV's and trucks brings with it the need for renewed emphasis on safe driving practices.

The National Safety Council offers this safety information about cellular phones:

When purchasing a car phone, consider type of phone and its ease of operation.

The Council strongly suggests a cellular phone with a hands-free speakerphone option, with the microphone installed in the sun visor directly above the driver's line of vision. Avoid the mistakes that many drivers make: DO NOT look at the speaker while talking.

The handset should be placed for the driver's maximum comfort and convenience by being easily accessible and allowing the driver to sit and drive normally. Every user also should insist on a dealer demonstration of mobile phone use before and during a test drive. A hand-held phone eliminates the use of one ear for hearing traffic noises and reduces peripheral vision out of the eye on the phone side.

Once the motorist is ready to begin actual use of a cellular mobile phone, they should remember that safe driving is the priority. The driver should keep both hands on the steering wheel and eyes on the road, using the speakerphone and letting the handset stay in its cradle whenever the vehicle is in motion.

Become familiar with how to use the phone. Read the user's manual and practice using the different features.

Using a car phone:

Mobile phone users should also assess the traffic situation before placing or receiving calls, making sure they are fully aware of road and vehicle distractions.

The safest method of calling is to dial phone numbers when stopped. Most phones allow the entry of numbers for calling at the user's convenience. Further, frequently called numbers can be stored within the phone's memory to minimize dialing while driving.

The Council stresses that phone users should remember to obey all traffic signs and signals and observe posted speed limits. Since users generally drive slower and drift within their lane, a motorist on the phone should drive in the slow traffic lane in case they decide to pull over to complete the call. The ability to pull over into a safe stopping place is especially important if notes have to be taken.

No motorist should try to take written notes while driving. Using the voice mail feature on the cellular phone can help to eliminate this distraction.

The Council emphasizes that driving safely must take precedence over phoning. When on the road, you should concentrate on safe and defensive driving, not on making phone calls.