



## Cell phones and distracted driving

### Talking on a hand-held cell phone now primary offense in Maryland

Legislation passed in the spring of 2013 and which became effective October 1, 2013 tightened the hand-held cell phone restriction in Maryland, changing it from a secondary to a primary offense.

A primary offense means that a police officer can ticket a driver for the offense without any other traffic violation taking place. A first offense for using a hand-held cell phone is punishable by a fine up to \$75; a second offense can cost up to \$125; and a third offense up to \$175. (There are some exceptions to the statute, which mainly apply to emergency calls.) Nearby jurisdictions which also ban handheld cell phone use include Delaware and Washington, DC.

Texting while driving has been banned for all drivers in Maryland since 2009. In 2011, the most recent year for which statistics are available, 231 people lost their lives and 29,050 were injured in distracted driver-related crashes in Maryland, according to the State Highway Administration's safety information database.

Read more about the legislation [here](#).

### Tips for Employers

These tips will help employers keep their employees safe when driving company vehicles:

- Establish work procedures that do not make it necessary for workers to talk or text while driving.
- Set up clear procedures, times, and places for drivers' safe use of talking and texting communications with customers, managers, and others.
- Enact a company policy prohibiting distracted driving. The U.S. Dept. of Transportation (DOT) has a sample policy available on its website.
- More information for employers is also available from the [Network of Traffic Safety \(NETS\)](#).

Source: U.S. DOT "Blueprint for Distracted Driving"

### Tips for Drivers

The following tips will help all drivers stay focused on the road:

- Pull off the road to a safe area if you must make or receive a phone call
- Ask a passenger to make or take a call for you.
- Do not engage in stressful or emotional conversations while driving.
- Avoid eating while driving. Food spills are a major cause of distraction.
- Review maps and driving directions before starting your trip.
- Do personal grooming at home – not in your car.
- Do not drive if you are drowsy, even if it means reworking your schedule.

Source: Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration "Distracted Driving Safety Programs"



This information and any noted recommendations are advisory only; Chesapeake Employers' Insurance Co. assumes no liability for identification or correction of conditions or hazards as the safety and health of employees remain the employer's responsibility. Not all foreseeable hazards or conditions in need of correction, and not all possible controls to address them, may be listed. Use of all or part of this safety information does not relieve employers of their responsibility to comply with all current and applicable local, state and/or federal laws, regulations, and codes. While the information herein is believed to be current as of the date published, the reader should rely upon the most current standards as laws, codes, and regulations are updated frequently.