**Why is cell phone use while driving dangerous?**

**The research below shows why driving and cell phone use is not a good combination.**

[Washington Traffic Safety Commission Fatal and Serious Injury Data](http://wtsc.wa.gov/research-data/quarterly-target-zero-data/)

Washington experienced a 30 percent increase in distracted-driving-related deaths between 2014 and 2015.

[2016 Washington State Distracted Driver Observational Survey](http://wtsc.wa.gov/research-data/traffic-safety-studies/)

A statewide Distracted Driving observational survey conducted in 2016 showed almost one in ten drivers were distracted behind the wheel. Seventy percent of these drivers were distracted by their cell phones.

[Cambridge Mobile Telematics – Boston Globe](https://www.cmtelematics.com/company-news/1-4-drivers-crashed-using-phone-just-study-finds/)

Nationally, about one in four drivers involved in a crash were using a smartphone within one minute before the collision occurred, according to a new analysis of data from hundreds of thousands of drivers’ phones.

**Hands-free devices are not safer than hand-held devices**.

[American Psychological Association – Driven to Distraction](http://www.apa.org/research/action/drive.aspx)

Dr. David Strayer, a cognitive psychologist at the University of Utah, conducted extensive research on the effects of distraction on performance. Using a high-fidelity driving simulator he has shown that cell phone conversations impaired visual attention. Eye-tracking data indicated that this was not due simply to differences in visual scanning of the driving scene, but rather was due to reduced attention to the objects directly in the driver’s line of sight. He found that even when drivers were directing their gaze at objects in the driving environment they often failed to see them. This is called Inattention Blindness.

The brain has limited capability to perform two divided mental tasks, such as driving and talking on a cell phone at the same time. A person may think they are successfully doing two tasks at once but in reality, the brain is constantly switching between those tasks. When driving becomes the secondary task, the brain pays less attention to the driving tasks and surrounding roadway hazards.

[AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety –Measuring Cognitive Distraction in the Automobile III](https://www.aaafoundation.org/measuring-cognitive-distraction-automobile-iii)

Research from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety has discovered that phone distraction "latency" lasts an average of 27 seconds, meaning that, even after drivers put down the phone or stop fiddling with an app, drivers aren't fully engaged with the driving task.

**Most believe cell phone use while driving is dangerous.**

[SurveyUSA Distracted Driving Phone Survey](https://www.dropbox.com/s/lym6he9srgquiqz/DD%20Ressearch%20Findings.pdf?dl=0)

When it comes to cell phone use while driving, most drivers believe that it is dangerous. A recent survey of Washington state women drivers found great agreement on the dangers of using a cell phone behind the wheel. The respondents explained why there is an apparent disconnect between their agreement that it is dangerous, and the fact that many still engage in cell phone use while driving—they believe that they are safe and they think everyone is doing it.