

## **Drive smart!**

**A series of driving observations and driving tips provided by:**

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Today's Topic: Cell Phones and other handheld devices

The use of Cell Phones behind while driving is prohibited in the State of New Jersey. Everybody knows that but just look around in your daily drive, hundreds of people don't get the message.

A study from the University of Utah concluded that drivers who use their cell phones driving at a similar level like drivers under the influence.

The test person; 25 men and 25 women between the age of 22 to 34.

The test person had to drive under different conditions in the simulator; using their cell phone, with and without hands free devices and also with a blood alcohol level of 0.8 while reacting to an unexpected braking maneuver of the car ahead. So in simple terms, execute an avoidance move.

The result: the person using their cell phone while driving in the simulation drove slower to begin with, applied the brakes later and needed longer to react to changing conditions on the road. The reaction time is similar to the reaction time of drivers under the influence. It did not play a role if the phone was used directly placed on the ear or using a hands free device.

The test clearly confirmed prior studies on that subject. These studies had shown that any misdirection of the drivers focus isn't caused necessary because of operating the cell phone; it is the content of the phone call itself that mandates a certain level of concentration and therefore triggers a driver to change focus. The suggestion is simply to pull over and take the phone call while stationary, 3-4 minutes that could make all the difference between being safe or having an accident.

Drive safely!

Thomas B.

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