

Cell phone safety—driving home the importance

These days, it's hard to find someone who does not have a cell phone. Cell phones can be invaluable for those business professionals who spend a lot of time out of the office, or for anyone who wants the added peace of mind of knowing they can call for help in an emergency.

Does New Hampshire have laws limiting the use of cell phones while driving and what are the penalties?

New Hampshire prohibits drivers from operating a motor vehicle on a public highway in a negligent manner. For the first-time offender, the fine is not less than \$250 and no more than \$500. The second-time offender can be fined no less than \$500 and no more than \$1,000.

Are there laws prohibiting the use of an electronic or telecommunication device for texting or other electronic data while driving?

New Hampshire prohibits the use of an electronic or telecommunication device used to transmit messages, including a moving picture messenger, and electronic mail. This law also applies to the operation of a motor vehicle. Violators can be fined for electronic or telecommunication device operating a motor vehicle on a public highway \$100.

What are some ways to stay safe while using your phone?

Be sure to read the literature that comes with your phone. Understand how to use many features—including speed dial, call forwarding, and hands-free options.

Be aware of your surroundings and avoid distractions

Be alert and avoid distractions while driving. Even a momentary lapse in hazardous driving conditions, whether traffic- or weather-related, could have your voicemail system pick up the call. A few minutes of paying attention and pulling over in a safe location, could make a huge difference in your safety and the safety of those around you.

Stay calm on the phone and on the road

Don't use driving time to engage in stressful or emotional conversations. They can distract you from driving safely and sensibly, even if you are using a hands-free phone.

Cell phones can be an invaluable business tool or your lifeline in a real emergency. But, remember, when you're behind the wheel, your most important responsibility is safe driving.



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