

# 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.

## Are there laws limiting the use of cell phones while driving?

New Jersey prohibits the use of cell phones while operating a motor vehicle on a public highway.

Hands-free cell phones, however, are permitted. Drivers under 21 are prohibited from using hands-free phones on a graduated license permit or provisional license, except in an emergency.

## Are there laws limiting the use of cell phones or electronic communication devices used for text messaging or e-mailing while driving?

New Jersey prohibits the use of cell phones or electronic communication devices used to transmit text messages or e-mail while driving. A driver charged with using a cell phone while driving will be fined for a first offense not more than \$200, or more than \$400 for a second offense, or more than \$800 for a third or subsequent offense. The court may also order individuals to forfeit the right to operate a motor vehicle on a New Jersey highway for 90 days. A driver assessed with three motor vehicle penalty points for individuals with a third or subsequent violation. Hands-free cell phones and electronic communication devices, however, are permitted.

Also, school bus drivers are prohibited from using a cell phone while driving a school bus, except in emergency situations. A driver charged with this violation will be fined not less than \$250, or more than \$500.

## Familiarize yourself with your phone

Be sure you review all the literature that comes with your phone. Understand how to use its many features—including speed dial, re-dial and hands-free options.

## Be aware of your surroundings and road conditions

If you find yourself in hazardous-driving conditions—whether traffic- or weather-related—let 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.



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