

# Army *Safety* Gram

## Leading on the Edge for Safety *Excellence*

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### *Lord of the Ring Take Charge of Cell Phones*

We live in a microwave society. We are conditioned to answer the phone whenever it rings. The phone has become a power over us rather than us over the cell phone. You need to become the Lord of the Ring. This is especially true while driving. Have you ever driven behind a slow vehicle, then passed it only to see a cell phone conversation taking place? Minutes later the driver speeds past you because he just hung up? Aggravating isn't it? It's also a serious hazard.

It seems that we want instantaneous contact. You hear it every day, "There's no way we can do business without cell phones; we would lose money."

Did you wonder how attorneys score those big settlements in cell phone traffic accidents? One way is to subpoena cell phone records after an accident. Settlements in cell phone accident lawsuits are in excess of \$16 million.

There have been numerous scientific studies that indicate the effects of cell phone use. Here are some of the results. They are scary.

- ◆ A delay in brake activation three times longer than the reaction deterioration found in drivers under the influence of alcohol;
- ◆ A four-fold increase in risk associated with the use of a cell phone while driving as compared to not using a cell phone;
- ◆ The increase in the relative risk of vehicle collisions similar to the hazard associated with driving with a blood alcohol level at the legal limit;
- ◆ A diversion of the driver's attention and situational awareness from the driving environment and potential hazards that may unexpectedly impact safety;
- ◆ A compromise in the safe following distance that would be provided by a fully aware and responsive driver. This compromise is caused by attention diverted to cell phone conversation;
- ◆ The reduction in the ability to maintain lane position while operating a heavy vehicle and an increase in potential crash hazard exposures for experienced drivers;
- ◆ No difference in the level of safety for the use of hands-free compared to hand-held design cell phones.

The design of cell phones has undergone many changes since they came on the market - smaller sizes, voice activation, hands-free features and text messaging.

The capability of humans to process information has remained limited and constant. Human mental capabilities are a limiting factor in safely performing multiple tasks, including talking on a cell phone while driving.



***So, think twice about those cell phones. Don't drive and talk on a cell phone. Enforce DoD's policy forbidding cell phone use on the road. Your life and the life of other drivers around you may just depend on it.***