



## [When Cell Phones Turn Deadly](#)

by [John Demas](#) on 07/31/09 at 1:40 pm

If we fail to come up with new, meaningful restrictions on driving while talking on cell phones, far too many of us may wind up seriously injured or killed in auto accidents. While we may be old enough to drive, we don't seem to have the necessary patience to drive a bit further (in non-emergency situations) to find a safe place to pull over and use our cell phones. By allowing this type of laziness, we endanger ourselves, our passengers, pedestrians, cyclists and everyone else out on the road.

In a recent [New York Times article](#), Matt Richtel noted that it took a Freedom of Information lawsuit to obtain federal government research indicating how dangerous it is for Americans to combine cell phone use with driving. (Interested readers can download a copy of this [lengthy study](#).) The following are some of the facts, arguments and danger estimates contained in that research:

- About 955 deaths were likely caused in 2002 by Americans who were using their cell phones while driving;
- Two-hundred and forty thousand (240,000) - or nearly a quarter of a million accidents, were caused by drivers who were talking on their cell phones at the time of their accidents;
- Just passing "hands-free" laws allowing cell phone users to keep talking on their phones if they aren't actually holding them is an inadequate remedy;
- It's all about focus. Everyone knows that human conversations can turn upsetting, argumentative or extremely challenging at any second. This reality robs drivers of the constant focus they need to avoid careless driving choices;
- Those who drive and talk on the phone are about four times more likely to cause an accident than those who refrain from "multi-tasking" or chatting on the phone while behind the wheel;
- People who talk on their cell phones while driving are about as likely to cause an accident as an individual driver with a blood alcohol content of 0.8;

- What's even more frightening is that this research was based on the assumption that only six percent (6%) of drivers use their phones while driving at any given time. It's now thought that this figure is closer to about twelve percent (12%);
- While some of the data may have been incomplete and lacking precision, the researchers who called for a more extensive study to be conducted immediately may have been urged to not voice their strong opinions - perhaps for political reasons. (See: "[Driven to Distraction.](#)")

However, you personally view the research now being fully released to the public, we think you'll probably agree with us that it's time we all start thinking about greatly limiting our cell phone use while driving.

We hope you've never been injured in an accident when either a friend or stranger was driving while talking on a cell phone. However, if you have, or know someone else who has, please let them know that we have the skills and lengthy legal experience to represent clients injured in such auto accidents.