



Ankin Law Office LLC

Protecting the Rights of Injured Workers

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Distracted Driving: Unsafe, But Is It Preventable?

In the past we've discussed distracted driving, in the context of [texting bans](#) and the use of [iPads in cars](#). And, I think we can all agree that in an ideal world, when driving, people should focus only on the road. This proposition makes sense, both for purposes of our own safety and the safety of others.

Unfortunately, the reality of the situation isn't that simple. People drive while distracted all the time, and have been doing so since the advent of cars. For example, as discussed in this Huffington Post [article](#), driving with kids in the car can be far more distracting than, for example, talking on the phone while driving.

As explained in the article, according to the United States Department of Transportation, there are 3 main types of driver distractions:

- Visual distractions lead drivers to take their eyes off the road.
- Manual distractions lead drivers to take their hands off the wheel.
- Cognitive distractions lead drivers to take their minds off what they're doing.

And, as explained in a recent [article](#) from thestar.com, according to some experts, "accepted" distractions such as talking while using a hands-free device are just as dangerous as those which are typically forbidden, such as using hand-held devices while driving.

In other words, any type of distraction presents a risk. That's not to say that distracted driving should be condoned or accepted as one of the hazards of driving. Rather, the focus should be on educating people about the hazards of all types of distracted driving and passing laws that forbid people from engaging in certain distracting activities while driving.

One way that governmental agencies have addressed this problem is by discouraging the people from engaging in distracting behaviors while driving on the job. For example, as explained in this [blog post](#) from the Workers' Compensation blog, employers are being encouraged to prohibit the use of cell phones by employees operating vehicles:

The [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health](#) (NIOSH) is following the lead of the [US Department of Labor](#) by encouraging employers to ban cell phone use while operating vehicles. An outright prohibition and supporting legislation may lead to the prohibition of workers' compensation benefits in many jurisdictions in the near future unless more global and radical action is taken to re-mediate this dangerous activity.

That's certainly a step in the right direction. This is a troubling issue and one that only increases in importance as mobile devices become increasingly popular. A good balance of education and laws banning distracted driving are the keys to combating the dangers presented and making the roads safer for everyone.

Howard Ankin of Ankin Law Office LLC (www.ankinlaw.com) handles [workers' compensation](#) and [personal injury cases](#). Mr. Ankin can be reached at (312) 346-8780 and howard@ankinlaw.com.

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[75% drive while distracted: survey](#) (cbc.ca)

[Distracted driving meets workplace safety \[The Pump Handle\]](#) (scienceblogs.com)

[Handset Use in Cars Kills 16,000](#) (dailyfinance.com)

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