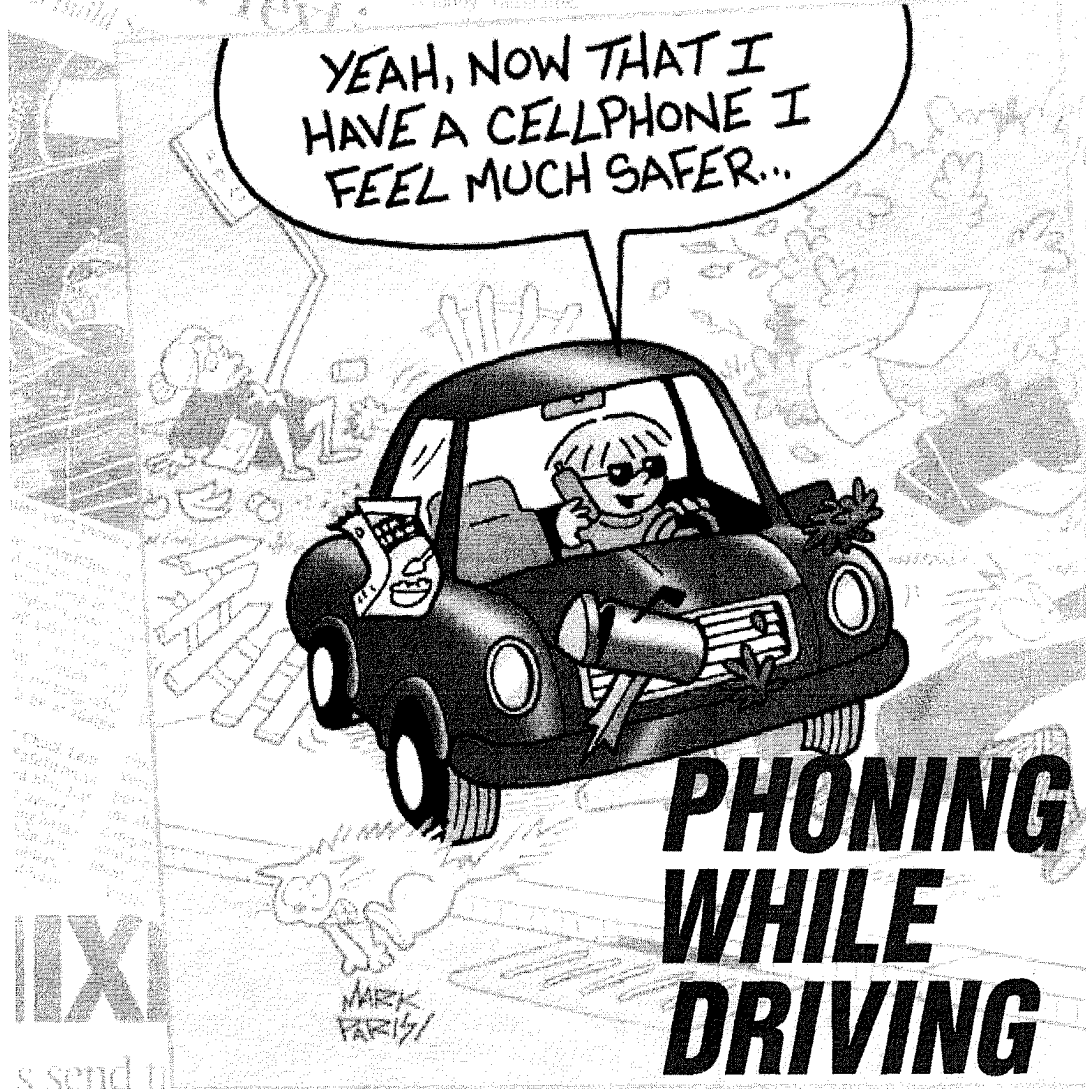


STATUS REPORT

INSURANCE INSTITUTE FOR HIGHWAY SAFETY

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to End Text: About Cars and Cellphones



PHONING WHILE DRIVING

and texting behind the wheel are in the news. This is the highway safety issue of the moment, the subject of cartoons and, on a more serious side, the focus of legislation. So it's a good time to step back and consider whether laws that ban driver phoning and

Why Calling and Driving Don't Mix

Driving Drunk, but Texting?

Lab Law Sees Little Difference

Telephone Laws

Laws Restricting Cell Phone U

EYES ON THE ROAD

Driving While Textin' Is It the New DWI?

a DWI Citation

What about no texting while driving?

Shut Up and Drive

The Heckle: A Noisy Choice for Cell-Phone Conversations

Cabbies Stay on Their Phones: Despite Ban and Proven Risk

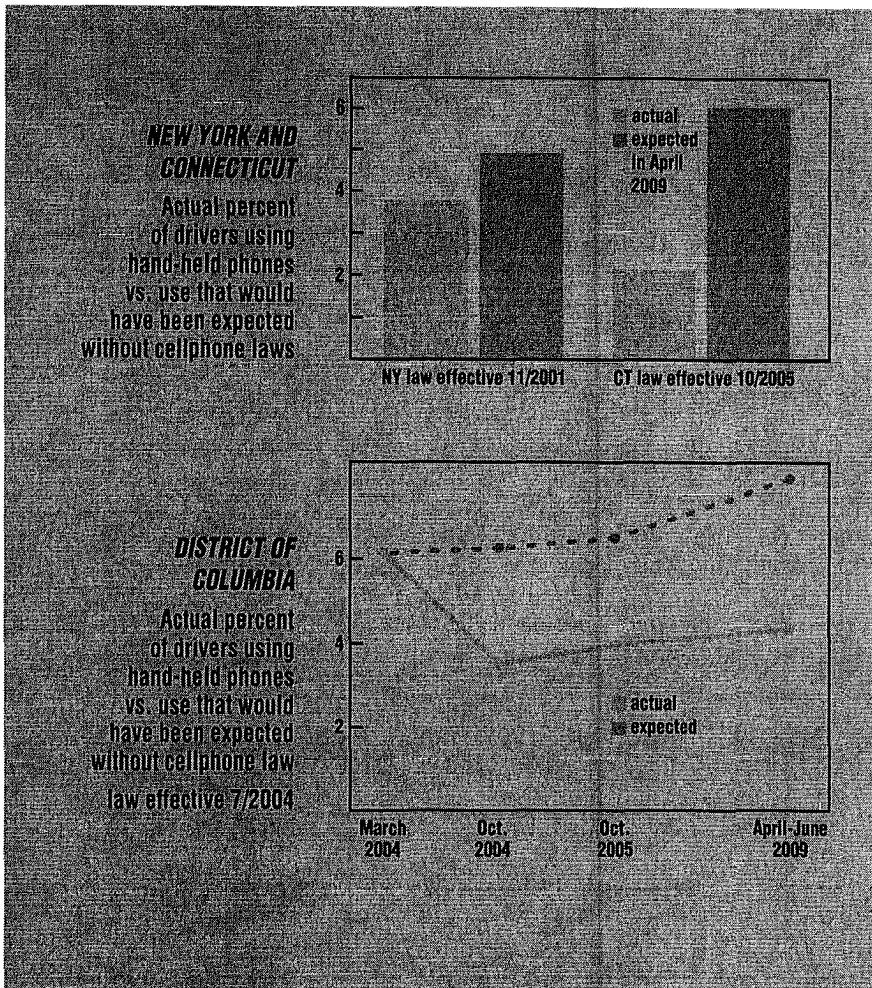
By MICHAEL DE GRASIA

The prohibition against the cabbies that is often the rule of the road, can be broken and broken.

Texting to Death

calling road safety groups, the Governor's High-Speed Advisory Committee, and other groups support the ban. The ban is a key element in a new package of measures to improve highway safety. The package includes a ban on texting while driving, a ban on driving while using a handheld cell phone, and a ban on driving while using a handheld cell phone while driving.

While an advisory committee from the insurance industry has urged the state to ban handheld cell phone use while driving, the state's transportation department has urged the state to ban handheld cell phone use while driving.



WHERE PHONING IS PROHIBITED AND WHERE IT'S ALLOWED

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that 11 percent of drivers on the road in 2008 were using some type of phone, and state legislators are taking action:

Seven states (California, Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Utah, and Washington) and the District of Columbia ban driving while talking on hand-held phones.

The laws in 6 states without statewide hand-held phone bans (Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, and Oklahoma) specifically prohibit local officials from enacting such bans. Officials in other US communities don't need statutory authority.

For example, hand-held phone use while driving is prohibited in Cheyenne, Wyoming; Chicago, Illinois; Oahu, Hawaii; and Waupaca County, Wisconsin.

Seventeen states and the District of Columbia prohibit school bus drivers from using any kind of phone. Twenty-one states and the District of Columbia restrict beginning drivers from using any kind of phone. No state prohibits all drivers from using hands-free phones.

Eighteen states and the District of Columbia prohibit all drivers from text messaging, and another 9 states apply such a ban to beginning drivers only.

For more information about state laws on cellphone use and text messaging, go to iihs.org/laws/cellphonelaws.aspx.

texting make sense. A key question is whether such laws succeed in changing patterns of driver cellphone use.

Institute researchers recently conducted a new round of observations of driver use of hand-held phones in 3 jurisdictions where the practice is banned. The findings, along with results of previous studies (see *Status Report*, Aug. 26, 2003; on the web at iihs.org), reveal differing effects. In the District of Columbia, the proportion of drivers using hand-held phones dropped by about half immediately after a ban took effect in 2004. Nearly 5 years later use has edged up a little, but the decline is largely holding relative to nearby Virginia and Maryland.

The story is different in New York, the first US state to prohibit drivers from using hand-held phones in 2001. Connecticut enacted a ban in 2005. Comparing trends in these states over time, researchers found immediate effects of both laws. Cellphone use declined an estimated 76 percent in Connecticut and 47 percent in New York. But then use began going back up.

Effects of the laws over time: To quantify the long-term effects, researchers observed phone use multiple times during 2001-09 in both the study states and nearby communities without phone bans. The purpose was to estimate the proportion of drivers expected to be using hand-held phones if the laws hadn't been enacted. By this measure, hand-held phone use was an estimated 65 percent lower in Connecticut, 24 percent lower in New York, and 43 lower in the District of Columbia than would have been expected without the laws.

In Connecticut and New York, phone use was higher in spring 2009 among women of all ages compared with men and higher among drivers younger than 25 versus 25-59 year-olds. Only 1 percent of drivers 60 and older were observed using phones.

"What's clear from the surveys, despite some variability in their findings, is that bans on hand-held phoning while driving can have big and long-term effects, but the safety implications still aren't clear," says Institute president Adrian Lund. "Many drivers still use their hand-held phones, even

where it's banned, and other drivers simply switch to hands-free phones, which doesn't help because crash risk is about the same, regardless of phone type."

Phone use, texting, and crash risk: The question of the risk associated with using various electronic devices while driving was the focus of debate at a recent summit convened by Ray LaHood, US Secretary of Transportation. Participants cited a number of studies.

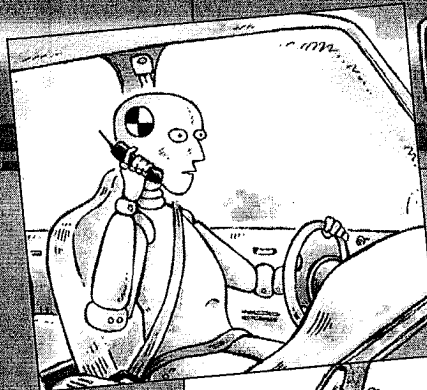
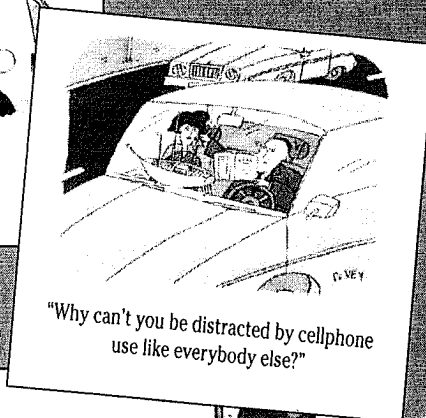
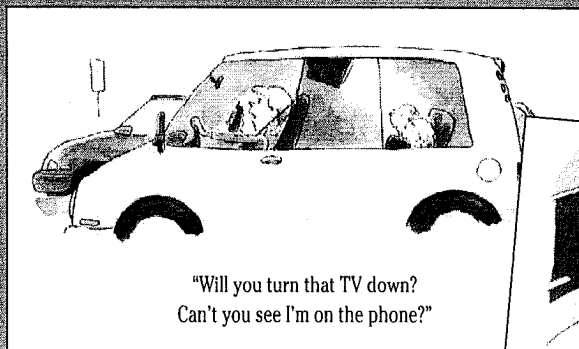
For example, 2006 research from the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute involved instrumenting cars with video and sensors to estimate the risk associated with phoning. The main finding is an almost 3-fold increase in the odds of crashing or nearly crashing when dialing a hand-held phone. The increase is 1.3 for talking. However, this study included only 100 cars and not many crashes occurred during the study period, so the results are inconclusive.

Researchers at the same organization say the risk associated with text messaging may be much higher, based on a new study of truck drivers. The main finding is a 23-fold increase in the odds of crashing, nearly crashing, or drifting from a travel lane among truckers who texted while they drove. A limitation is that most of the incidents involved lane drift or other driver error, not crashes, and it's unknown how such incidents relate to actual crashes.

Two studies that rely on the cellphone records of crash-involved drivers show big increases in crash risk when drivers talk on phones, whether hands-free or hand-held (see *Status Report*, July 16, 2005; on the web at ihs.org). The risk of a crash involving injury or property damage is 4 times as high.

Other studies have been conducted on simulators. Virtually all of these confirm that phoning impairs driving performance, and the impairment is similar for hand-held and hands-free phones.

"Whether the risk associated with phoning or texting while driving is 4-fold or 23-fold or somewhere in between, the fact of the risk is clear," Lund points out. "Manual dialing and texting seem (continues on p.6)



(continued from p. 3) especially risky, but talking also involves crash risk, and drivers spend more time talking on phones than dialing.”

Besides the precise risk associated with hand-held phone use, there's more researchers don't know. Banning hand-held phones does reduce their use while driving, for example, but it isn't known whether such bans also reduce crashes. Nor is it known how drivers respond when hand-held phones are banned. This has important implications concerning the laws state legislators are considering.

Laws may be difficult to enforce: The crash risk is about the same, whether drivers use hand-held or hands-free phones, so if motorists respond to hand-held bans by switching the type of phone they use, they may not be reducing crash risk. What they're doing, though, is engaging in a practice that's harder to curb because laws against it are harder to enforce.

“Police officers can see whether a driver is holding a phone to the ear, but it's going to be much harder to determine if a driver is sending a text message or talking on a hands-free phone,” Lund points out.

No US state currently bans all drivers from using hands-free phones. Twenty-one states and the District of Columbia prohibit beginning drivers from using any type of phone, including hands-free, but these laws are hard to enforce. This was the finding in North Carolina, where teenage drivers didn't curtail phone use in response to such a ban, in part because they didn't think the law was being enforced (see *Status Report*, June 9, 2008; on the web at iihs.org).

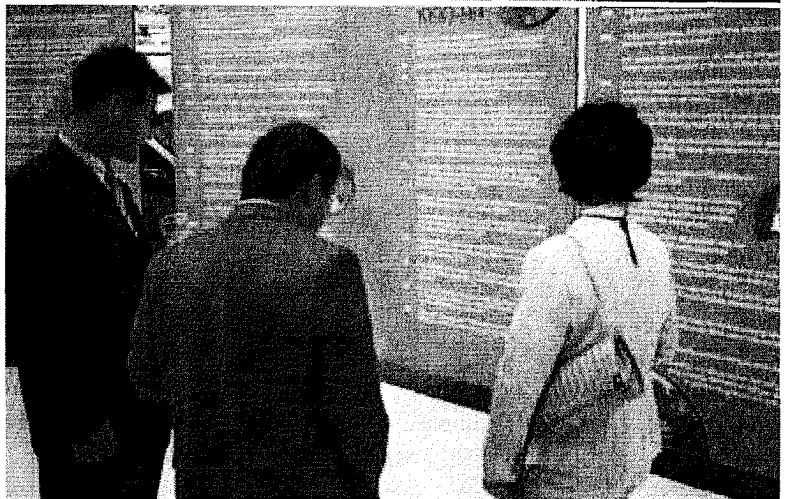
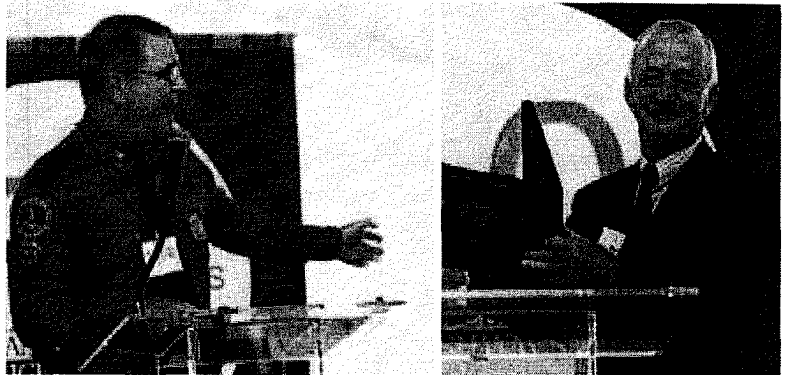
Technology could make a difference: The best approach would be to use technology to control how and when motorists use their cellphones. Devices are in the works that would block phone use in moving vehicles, but a problem is that such devices would block phoning by passengers as well as drivers. To get around this, some systems include a passenger mode, but it's unclear whether drivers can be prevented from activating it to circumvent the whole purpose of the devices.

The main use of such technology may be among fleet managers to control phone use by employees or among parents who want to monitor their teenage drivers. However, phone blockers of any sort aren't yet in widespread use, and their effects aren't known.

For a copy of “Long-term effects of hand-held cell-phone laws on driver hand-held cellphone use” by A.T. McCartt et al., write: Publications, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, 1005 North Glebe Road, Arlington, VA 22201, or email publications@iihs.org.



In the crash test involving the two Chevrolets, the 2009 Malibu's occupant compartment remained intact (above left) while the one in the 1959 Bel Air (right) collapsed.



The Institute's 50th anniversary celebration featured a tribute by Virginia State Police superintendent Stephen Flaherty (above left) and presentation of an honorary **TOP SAFETY PICK** award to former Institute president Brian O'Neill (above right). Guests viewed a chronology of Institute work (above) and a video presentation of the Institute's contributions to highway safety over half a century. Attracting the most attention at the Sept. 9 event was a collection of milestone cars including a vintage Ford (facing page), which was among the first cars equipped with significant safety features. During the celebration, ABC News conducted interviews with Institute president Adrian Lund (far right).