Cell phone use

**Introduction:**
Cell phones can be a great convenience and a great tool. However, it can be dangerous to use one at the wrong time or place. Inattention or a distraction while driving may cause an accident resulting in property damage or personal injury.

**Hazards to watch for:**
According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety:
- The risk of a crash or near crash is 17 percent or higher when the driver is interacting with a cell phone.
- Reaching for, answering or dialing a cell phone nearly tripled the risk of a crash.
- Cell phone users have significantly poorer reaction time.
- One study showed, the risk of a rear-end crash or near crash was more than five times higher when drivers were texting.

Also be aware:
- Using a cell phone while driving reduces your field of view.
- A ringing cell phone may startle the driver and cause an accident.

**Safe procedures:**
Eliminate cell phone use while driving:
- Never take a phone call while driving.
- Allow passenger to answer or let it go to voicemail.
- Never send or read text messages while driving. It is against the law in Minnesota.
- Do not use email function or surf the Web while driving.
- Cell phone laws apply while at stop sign or stop light as well.

**In conclusion:**
Remember, cell phones have become a valuable tool in the world today. Although hands free telephones reduce manual and visual distractions, cognitive distractions are still present.

But no call or text message is that important to risk your life while driving. If it is an emergency, pull over and then make the call to ensure that roads stay safe.

Let’s make the decision to stop using cell phones while driving and tell others to do the same.