Distracted Driving (Cellphone Use) – Picture This



What’s wrong in this picture, using mobile phones can cause drivers to take their eyes off the road, their hands off the steering wheel, and their minds off the road and the surrounding situation. It is this last type of distraction – known as cognitive distraction – which appears to have the biggest impact on driving behaviour. Evidence shows that the distraction caused by mobile phones can impair driving performance in a number of ways, e.g. longer reaction times (notably braking reaction time, but also reaction to traffic signals), impaired ability to keep in the correct lane, and shorter following distances. Text messaging also results in considerably reduced driving performance, with young drivers at particular risk of the effects of distraction resulting from this use.

Studies suggest that drivers using a mobile phone are approximately four times more likely to be involved in a crash than when a driver does not use a phone. At the time of writing, there is no conclusive evidence to show that hands-free phoning is any safer than hand-held phoning, because of the cognitive distraction involved with both types of phones.