




Adventist Risk Management, Inc.



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Thou Shalt Not Selfie While Driving

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Raise your hand if you've ever used your cell phone while driving. (Even if you didn't raise your hand, we're all probably guilty of two or three instances.)

For many, using a cell phone while driving can seem harmless. How can setting your GPS or catching up with a friend on the phone be dangerous? You may think you are focused and in full control of your motor vehicle. But the truth is **when you're using your cell phone you are not 100 percent focused on driving.**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) name the three main types of distraction when driving:

- Visual: taking your eyes off the road
- Manual: taking your hands off the wheel
- Cognitive: taking your mind off of driving

When you use your cell phone, you are combining all three types of distraction. This makes for an especially dangerous situation. According to the National Safety Council, an estimated one in four car crashes involves cell phone use. Although [many states have created laws](#) to reduce distracted driving, the number of car accidents continues to rise annually. The [CDC states](#) that "an additional 421,000 people were injured in motor vehicle crashes involving a distracted driver in 2012, a 9 percent increase from the 387,000 people injured in 2011."

Often when you are driving a school or church vehicle, there are others in the car with you. You are responsible not only for your safety but also the safety of the other passengers in the car. As both risk managers and leaders in Adventist churches and schools, you have an opportunity to set an example.

To help you navigate the obstacles that come with distracted driving, here are **ARM's three options** to get you from Point A to Point B safely.

Option 1: Plan Ahead

Do you know where you're going? Do you need directions or an address? Are you supposed to call ahead and confirm your appointment before you arrive? Instead of waiting to enter the destination in your GPS or calling for directions while you're backing out of your parking spot, plan ahead. If you're on the phone with someone or text messaging a friend, let him or her know you will be driving and unable to talk for a while. When possible, ask a co-worker to come along with you and co-pilot. Your co-pilot can then help give you directions and make phone calls for you if need be.

Taking care of these things beforehand can help you avoid the need to pull out your phone and prevent a deadly situation that can stem from taking your eyes, hands, and mind off the road. It only takes a few minutes complete a mental checklist and ensure you're ready to drive, distraction-free.

Option 2: Take the Conversation Off the Road

An emergency situation will require your attention at some point. Answering a phone call requires you to take your eyes off the road. Sometimes you even have to take your hands off the wheel. So, how do you handle this?

The safest way is to pull over and away from traffic before answering the phone. Once you have safely stopped, take the phone call. Wait until you have finished your conversation before getting back on the road. You can then turn your full attention to the task at hand: arriving at your destination safely! If you don't want to pull over every time you receive a phone call, refer to **Option 1** and let your friends and family know you'll be occupied. Give them an estimated time as to when you'll be free to talk.

Option 3: Elect to Go Hands-Free

Sometimes it is unavoidable to go completely device-free when you're on the road, and you need to use your mobile device. That doesn't mean you should pull out your cell phone to take a selfie because the lighting is just right or record yourself singing along to the latest *Hillsong United* song release.

Maybe you are driving to a new location and need the GPS to direct you there. It is illegal in most states to use a cell phone while driving, but others allow a hands-free option. Instead of holding the GPS or mobile device in your hand, invest in a mobile phone holder that attaches to your dashboard or windshield. This tool allows you to keep your eyes on the road instead of having to glance down at your phone. Don't forget to turn up the volume on the GPS speaker. You can utilize the option for it to guide you with step-by-step audible directions.

A hands-free option is also helpful for emergency phone calls that might occur while you're on the road and unable to pull over. Consider a Bluetooth or voice-controlled device to avoid taking your hands off the wheel to answer a call.

For more information on distracted driving laws in your state, [click here](#).

Distracted driving, especially when it involves a cell phone, is just an accident waiting to happen. The next time you find yourself reaching for the phone, remember—you always have options.

References

¹ <http://www.nsc.org/learn/NSC-Initiatives/Pages/distracted-driving.aspx>

² http://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/distracted_driving/

³ http://www.ghsa.org/html/stateinfo/laws/cellphone_laws.html

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