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Should Drivers Be Banned from Using Cell Phones?

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) recommends a ban on the use of cell phones and other portable electronics by automobile drivers

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The National Transportation Safety Board unanimously recommended Tuesday that all states ban the use of cell phones and other portable [electronics](#) by automobile drivers. Though the board cannot enact regulations itself, its suggestions are taken seriously by lawmakers. Many states have some sort of legislation dealing with cell phone use while driving, be it a ban on texting or the requirement of hands-free equipment. However, this latest recommendation exceeds those measures, calling for a prohibition of all usage with the exception of emergency situations.

The debate surrounding cell phone use while operating a vehicle is by no means new. A [2009 study reported](#) that that texting while driving makes a car crash six times more likely, and legislation has been taken up by lawmakers long before that. [Rep. Carolyn McCarthy](#), who sponsored 2009's Avoiding Life-Endangering and Reckless [Texting](#) by Drivers Act, argued,

Promoting and setting forth an agenda that improves roadway safety rises above political ideology. Whether one is a novice or experienced [driver](#), actions that lead to diverting one's eyes from the roadway and hands from the steering wheel can, and often do, lead to roadway accidents.

However, critics of such legislation assert it is difficult to enforce and is the result of overblown media reaction, not reasonable solutions. [Said Radley Balko](#) of *Reason* magazine and the Cato Institute, "These laws aren't about safety; they're about symbolism."