

SAFETY SENSE

Driving And Talking: Safety Tips For Wireless Users On The Road

(NAPSA)—Wireless communications devices such as cell phones and PDAs (personal digital assistants) have dramatically changed consumers' communication habits. Many mobile phone users view their device as a critical component to staying connected with friends and family—that includes talking on the phone while driving.

Safe-driving habits have become more important than ever. According to a recent survey by Pew Internet & American Life Project, more than a quarter of cell phone owners (28 percent) admit they sometimes do not drive as safely as they should while they use their mobile devices. Whether you're driving around the corner or across the state, it's important to remember to use wireless phones safely.

"Vacation season is here and that means more road trips to the beach, the mountains or other places to escape while enjoying time with family and friends," said Bob Dawson, president and CEO of SouthernLINC Wireless. "SouthernLINC Wireless as well as other industry leaders like CTIA [Cellular Telecommunications & Internet Association] are committed to sharing best practices that drivers can adopt to increase safety while on the road."

Using proper judgment while driving and using a cell phone is essential, and most safety recommendations are just good plain sense. As a driver, your first responsibility is to pay attention to the highway, so next time you are on the road, remember the following cell phone safety tips from SouthernLINC Wireless:

- Use a hands-free device that allows you to use a wireless phone without holding the phone to your



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ear. This frees both hands for use on the steering wheel. Keep in mind that your phone does not have to be Bluetooth-enabled to use a hands-free headset or earpiece.

- Get to know your wireless device and its features, such as speed dial and redial. Many mobile phones come equipped with voice-activated dialing, which allows you to place a call without having to manually enter the number.

- Keep your phone within easy reach in the car, not in your purse or glove compartment. If your phone rings and you are unable to safely take the call, let it go to voicemail.

- If you must take an incoming call, let the caller know that you are driving. Don't be afraid to end the call if the weather gets bad or the traffic gets heavy.

- Pull over to a safe spot before looking up a phone number, taking notes during a conversation or text messaging.

- Use your phone to report serious emergencies on the road as well as reckless, aggressive or impaired drivers. Dialing 9-1-1 is free from most wireless phones.