

Hands-free cellphones don't make driving safer

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(HealthDay)—Hands-free cellphone use while driving is not risk-free driving, new research shows.

Eighty percent of U.S. [drivers](#) think hands-free smartphones are safer than hand-held ones when they are behind the wheel, the National Safety Council has found. But the council's experts analyzed 30 studies and found using a hands-free device while [driving](#) is no safer than using a hand-held phone because both are a distraction. Although 12 states and the District of Columbia have banned the use of hand-held cellphones while driving, hands-free devices have not been regulated by any state or municipality, according to the council.

A growing number of cars are being equipped with dashboard systems that allow drivers to make hands-free calls, send text messages, e-mail, and even update their social media statuses, the study authors noted. The researchers found that 53 percent of those polled believe these devices are safe because they were installed by the car's manufacturer. Moreover, 70 percent of those surveyed said they use hands-free devices for [safety](#) reasons.

"While many drivers honestly believe they are making the safe choice by using a hands-free device, it's just not true," David Teater, senior director of transportation initiatives at the National Safety Council, said in a news release. "The problem is the brain does not truly multitask. Just like you can't read a book and talk on the phone, you can't safely operate a vehicle and talk on the phone. With some state laws focusing on hand-held bans and carmakers putting hands-free technology in vehicles, no wonder people are confused."

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