

# Researchers encourage legislation that covers drivers of all ages to keep roadways safer

December 12 2016

---

Distracted driving is a prevalent safety hazard for everyone, but especially for drivers in their first several years behind the wheel. A new study from the Center for Injury Research and Policy at The Research Institute at Nationwide Children's Hospital shows that universal handheld phone bans for all drivers may be effective at reducing handheld phone use among young drivers.

In a study published online today and in the December print issue of *Annals of Epidemiology*, researchers examined data for young [drivers'](#) handheld cell phone use across the country from 2008 through 2013 and compared it to state legislation regarding cell phone use while [driving](#). Nationally, over the six-year period, [young drivers](#) in states with a universal handheld phone ban were 58 percent less likely to have a phone conversation while driving as those in states without a ban. This effect increases the longer the law is in effect.

"We know that traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for young adults between 15 and 24 years of age, and distraction is a key factor in many of these crashes," said Motao Zhu, MD, MS, PhD, the study's lead author and principal investigator in the Center for Injury Research and Policy at Nationwide Children's Hospital. "Our study shows that bans work. We encourage all [states](#) to implement universal bans on handheld phone use while driving to help keep everyone safer while they are on our roads." Dr. Zhu recommends a universal ban because it is easier to enforce than a ban based on age, and everyone benefits from roadways with fewer distracted drivers.

Data for this study were obtained from the National Occupant Protection Use Survey which uses roadside-observed handheld phone conversation at stop signs or lights in cities across the United States. The study also looked at state legislation regarding [cell phone](#) use while driving.

**More information:** Motao Zhu et al. The association between handheld phone bans and the prevalence of handheld phone conversations among young drivers in the United States, *Annals of Epidemiology* (2016). [DOI: 10.1016/j.annepidem.2016.10.002](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annepidem.2016.10.002)

Provided by Nationwide Children's Hospital

Citation: Researchers encourage legislation that covers drivers of all ages to keep roadways safer (2016, December 12) retrieved 5 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-12-legislation-drivers-ages-roadways-safer.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.