

# FULLER FACTS

SUMMER • 2008

## HELPFUL SUMMER TIPS

### The New Washington State Cell Phone Driving Laws



Washington State has two cell-phone related driving laws going into effect in 2008. The first one took effect January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008. That law bans text messaging while driving and makes it a traffic infraction; this is not a hands-free law, but a complete ban on text messaging while driving.

The other new cell phone related driving law went into effect in July, 2008, and is the “Hands-Free” law. This new hands-free cell

phone law prohibits the use of a wireless device such as a cell phone being held to your ear while you are driving. Unlike the text messaging ban, you are allowed to use your cell phone if the communication is made using a hands-free device such as a bluetooth headset or wired headset. This law does not apply to a person with a hearing aid.

Like the text messaging ban above, the Washington State hands-free driving law is a secondary enforcement law. You will receive a ticket for this offense only if you are pulled over for another type of traffic violation such as speeding or running a stop sign.

#### How To Be Hands Free - The Choices

Almost all new cell phones have some sort of hands-free option. The following are your choices:

1. WIRELESS HEADSETS - A hands-free cell phone communicates with a wireless signal called bluetooth. Keep in mind that your cell phone must be bluetooth compatible if you are expecting to take advantage of this hands-free option. Be careful with “free” cell phone offers as the phone may not be bluetooth compatible.
2. WIRED HEADSETS - Wired headsets are an economical way to become hands-free. Although the wired headsets are not as trendy as the bluetooth wireless headsets, some people feel that the sound quality on both ends is much clearer than with a wireless connection.
3. CAR KITS - Car Kits come in two varieties: “Installed” and “Portable.” These car kits have advanced control options including muting options for your car stereo when receiving a call and a routing of the voice signal through your car stereo speakers.

#### Summary

There are many ways to become hands-free. The bottom line is your budget, your tolerance for technology, and what works for your individual situation. Whatever your choice, for the sake of your safety and others, the attorneys at Fuller and Fuller urge you and your family members to become cell phone “hands-free” and “text-free” immediately.

# Fuller & Fuller

Accident & Injury Lawyers

204 Custer Way  
Olympia, Washington 98501

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