

CALIFORNIA DISTRACTED DRIVING RISKS

“Drivers in California Have Not Given Up Using Electronic Communications Behind The Wheel, They’ve Just Switched To Voice Control Systems”



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In the state of California, drivers are subject to some of the strictest distracted driving laws in the United States. The law in California prohibits the use of wireless electronic devices that do not have hands-free controls. Drivers are not allowed to talk on their phones or text unless voice-control systems are utilized. The Mercury News reported on a decision made in 2014 allowing drivers to use a GPS map on a phone, but outside of this limited use, drivers can face large fines if they have a phone to their ear or are typing on a phone when behind the wheel.

Although California is strict on the issue of distracted driving, the risk of accidents caused by drivers on their phones continues. Drivers in California have not given up using electronic communications behind the wheel, they've just switched to voice control systems. California law permits this, and many people believe it is safe to be on the phone as long as your hands are on the wheel. Unfortunately, studies show this is not actually true. The use of a hands-free or voice control system in your vehicle may actually be *more* dangerous than simply picking up the phone.

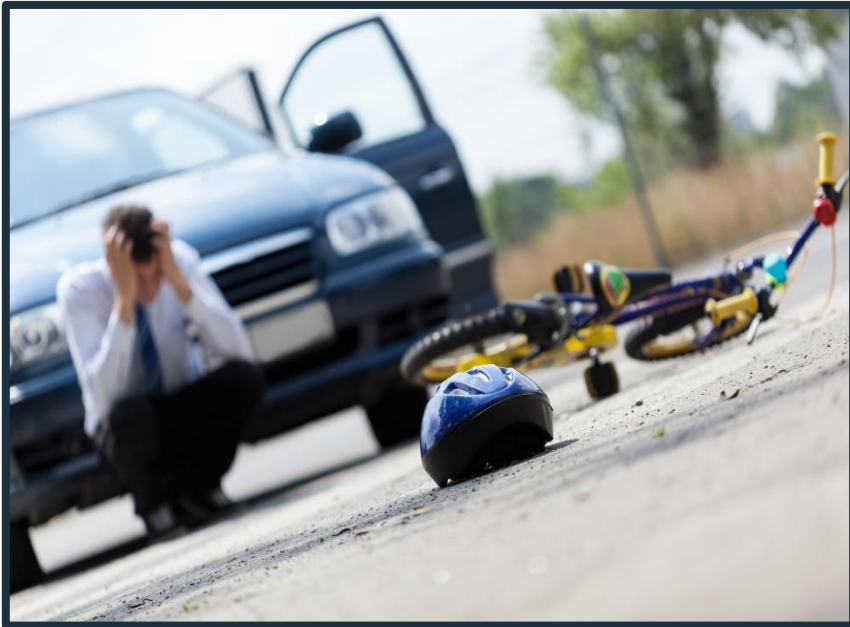
HANDS-FREE PHONE AND ELECTRONIC USE IS MORE LIKELY TO LEAD TO LONG BEACH ACCIDENTS

Evidence is mixed on whether California's cell phone ban has been effective at preventing motor vehicle accidents.



Research from Southern Methodist University revealed there was a statistically significant decline in rear-end accidents after California's cell phone ban went into effect in 2008. Between 2006 and 2008, there were an estimated 13,552 reported rear end crashes. From 2008 to 2010, there were 11,708 rear-end collisions. Even when researchers took into account other factors that could explain the decline in collisions the handheld device ban still had a positive impact on bringing rear-end crash rates down.

Another study from the University of Colorado Boulder found no evidence there was a decrease in traffic accidents in the state of California in the first months after the ban went into effect. The study was not designed to specifically determine the reasons why the ban may not have been effective. However, researchers suggested one possible reason why so many distracted driving accidents were still occurring,



is because people switched to voice control systems.

The switch to voice control systems may have actually made the distracted driving situation in California worse. According to Yahoo News, two studies demonstrate the risks associated with the use

of infotainment and voice control systems on cell phones when operating a vehicle. The purpose of the studies, which were conducted by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety and by the University of Utah, was to assess the level of distraction presented by hands-free systems.

Researchers graded the different hands-free devices on a scale of one to five, with five considered the most distracting. Siri, Apple's hands-free virtual assistant, proved to be the most distracting for motorists, receiving a distraction rating of 4.14. MyLink, which is a Chevrolet voice control system, had a distraction rating of 3.7 and was the second worst of the hands-free systems studied.

While other systems included in the study did slightly better than Siri and MyLink, every hands-free system was found to present a higher level of distraction than using a telephone to talk while holding the phone in the hands.



The studies reported on by Yahoo produced results similar to other past research. The National Safety Council has collected more than 30 studies showing why hands-free devices are not any safer for motorists than handheld cell phones and electronics. These studies all highlight the dangers of inattention blindness and make clear that people are simply unable to multi-task effectively.

When a motorist is on the phone, his brain energy is not focused on driving. He does not see things that are in front of him, and he is slower to respond when an obstacle is in his path. The delayed reaction time can be deadly for pedestrians and when the distracted driver strikes other vehicles.

A LONG BEACH ACCIDENT LAWYER CAN HELP

“Your Injuries are Personal to Me”

Motorists can be held accountable for a distracted driving accident even when not using a handheld device. A driver who is on a hands-free system and who makes



careless driving decisions can still be held accountable for a crash if his behavior is considered negligent.

Call the Law Office of Michael D. Waks at 888-394-1174 or use the convenient [online contact form](#) to schedule a free consultation. You are

under no obligation and you will never pay any money unless you recover damages for your injuries. I offer bilingual services as part of my comprehensive approach to legal representation and I am available 24/7 to talk to you about your case.

About the Author



Michael D. Waks

Personal injury victims need someone who understands their pain, who is invested in them and will guide them through the complicated maze of their medical and legal worries. They need an attorney who cares about them and their families.

My name is Michael Waks and I am a personal injury attorney in the Los Angeles Area focused on the needs of people who have suffered because of someone else's actions.

While still attending Southwestern University School of Law, I clerked for a big defense law firm that represented manufacturers of asbestos. I read the files and met the people whose lives were ruined by asbestos and I knew, for the rest of my career, I wanted to help people like them: the victims, not the perpetrators.

I have been doing just that for over 30 years. As soon as I passed the Bar I opened the Law Office of Michael D. Waks in Long Beach and began exclusively representing seriously injured accident victims. I decided to be a sole practitioner so I could handle every case personally. I understand clients are different and that in the wake of an accident their suffering will be unique, ranging from physical and financial to emotional.

I tell my clients from the start, "I want you to only worry about one thing, and that is to do exactly what your doctor tells you in order to get better. Leave the rest to me."

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