# [***Ban cell use while driving***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:4J90-PDP0-TX77-B30H-00000-00&context=1516831)

Prince George Citizen (British Columbia)

January 3, 2003 Friday

Final Edition

Copyright 2003 Prince George Citizen All Rights Reserved

**Section:** OPINION; Pg. 4

**Length:** 378 words

**Byline:** Dave Paulson, The Citizen

**Body**

It would garner widespread opposition from legions of ***cellphone*** owners, but B.C. would do well to follow Newfoundland's lead and ban the use of hand-held ***cellphones*** while driving.

It makes sense.

We're taught to drive with both hands on the steering wheel. Anyone will agree that driving with one hand in most situations is more dangerous than driving with two. Now add the distraction of carrying on a conversation with a phone pinned to your ear while driving in tight traffic or dicey situations.

Driving while talking on a ***cellphone*** is like most anything else; it takes getting used to. But regardless of how experienced a driver/talker is, it stands to reason that a driver's reaction time is compromised when he or she is concentrating on two tasks at once. And one of those tasks -- keeping an automobile out of trouble -- is obviously far more important than the other.

There is no shortage of drivers who can tell their story of a near-miss while he or she was talking on a ***cellphone***.

Surprisingly, the Canada Safety Council says ***cellphone*** use by drivers doesn't make highways more dangerous. The council notes there are now 10 million ***cellphones*** in Canada compared to 1.8 million in 1993, but during that time traffic fatalities and injuries dropped 10 per cent. It's a good bet that safer cars and highways are responsible for the decline in fatalities and injuries, including those accidents involving drivers who were using a ***cellphone*** at the time.

Conversely, a study published in the New England Journal of Medicine found talking on a ***cellphone*** -- whether hand-held or a hands-free phone -- while driving was responsible for a four-fold increase in the risk of being in an accident.

Particularly alarming is the abundance of young drivers who talk on ***cellphones*** while behind the wheel. Statistics show younger drivers are already the most accident prone. Their inexperience -- both in regular driving and accident avoidance -- is compounded by the distraction of concentrating on a conversation, not to mention the loss of one hand from the wheel.

The Pacific province should copy its Atlantic sister's lead. Banning the use of ***cellphones*** while driving would make Newfoundland and British Columbia common-sense bookends on the map of Canada.

It's the right call.

**Load-Date:** February 17, 2006

**End of Document**