

HANDS-FREE CELL PHONE USE POLICY

As you know, in May 2009, Governor Martin O'Malley issued Executive Order 01.01.2009.08 implementing the "Be A Driving Force for Safety" program for State employees. The new program supports Maryland's Choose Safety for Life campaign by promoting safe driving education and driving skills enhancement.

Among other things, the Executive Order requires the Department of Budget and Management to issue a hands-free policy for drivers of State vehicles. The policy statement, provided below, prohibits hand-held cell phone use while driving, except in cases of emergency. Consistent with the Executive Order, the policy does not apply to law enforcement officers or operators of authorized emergency vehicles.

Employees driving State vehicles are required to comply with all State and local laws regarding the use of mobile communications devices while driving. If a mobile communications device must be used by an employee while driving a State vehicle, a hands-free device must be used. Drivers are encouraged to keep mobile communications device use to a minimum. Whenever possible, employees should not make or receive calls while driving. Only in the case of an emergency is the use of a hand-held mobile communications device without a hands-free device permitted.

The above policy is effective October 1, 2009 and should be incorporated into any existing agency cell phone policies.

Thank you for your cooperation. Please feel free to contact Larry Williams, State Fleet Administrator at 410-260-7195 or larry.williams@maryland.gov if you need additional information.