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TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS OF ILLINOIS RISK MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

# RISK REMINDER

## Be Smart with Your Smartphone

As of January 1, 2014, it is illegal to use a hand-held wireless phone while operating a motor vehicle on a roadway in the state of Illinois unless it's done 'hands-free.

What are some hands-free devices you can legally use?

- Operating in speakerphone mode
- Bluetooth technology built into the vehicle
- Bluetooth headset that is worn on an ear
- External speaker phone such as one mounted on the visor of your vehicle
- GPS or other device with Bluetooth capability

The reason this became a law in Illinois is that distracted driving is a major and growing cause of vehicular crash injuries and fatalities. The safest way to drive is by giving your full attention to driving.

**Distracting walking is also a contributing cause of injuries.** Rather than focus your attention on your cellphone while walking, consider reading or replying to a text message or other item before leaving your vehicle or waiting until you're inside the building. An Ohio State University professor found in a study that for pedestrians, as with drivers, cognitive distraction from mobile phone use reduces situation awareness, increases unsafe behavior, putting pedestrians at greater risk for accidents.

Injuries while walking distracted include:

- Sprained ankles from stepping on rocks, twigs and other debris
- Trip and fall accidents from not seeing elevation changes in walking surfaces or not seeing obstacles in the walking path. These accidents can result in serious injuries to the body, including bruises and abrasions to knees, arms and hands, and head.
- Severe injuries from being hit by motor vehicles

The potential for being struck by a motor vehicle is increased when a pedestrian is not watching where they are walking. Whether it's in a parking lot, on a sidewalk or any walking surface, please **be smart with your smartphone!**



**For more information, contact your Loss Control Consultant at (800) 252-5059, ext. 1387 or 1384.**

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