

## Fortune Flags For Lakers Fan

**W**ITH the Purple and Gold back in the NBA Finals, Lakers car flags have returned to L.A. in force. **Clifford Isaac**, owner of Hollywood-based gotparty.com, says his novelties company has been selling out of the \$10 flags almost immediately after it gets a shipment.

"This is greater demand than the Shaq era," said Isaac, who said that like the Shaquille O'Neal-led teams of 2000-2002, this Lakers bunch will win it all.

Isaac not only supplies the flags but has created some demand. He has three flags on his car.

### Shopping Sprees

**Aly Scott**, founder of L.A.-based StyleChic, sees plenty of people willing to splurge. After all, she charges \$250 an hour just to guide customers on lavish shopping sprees that include chauffeured transportation and, of course, champagne. Still, there have been requests that stand above the rest.



Scott

Last summer, a Saudi Arabian princess who was in the L.A. area on vacation wanted a unique week-end hand bag before returning home. The hotel she was staying at contacted Scott to see if she could secure the \$1,500 Balenciaga bag. There were two problems: The princess was leaving the next day and the bag was only available in Las Vegas.



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# Safety Hang-Up

**REGULATION:** State's 'hands-free' cell phone law poses liability threat to businesses.

By **JOEL RUSSELL** Staff Reporter

**W**HEN California's "hands-free" cell phone law goes into effect July 1, drivers who are caught talking without a headset will face a fine topping \$75 on a first violation and approaching \$200 on a second.

Costly.

But it's chump change compared to the potential liability a business could face if an employee violates the law and causes an accident.

Earlier this year, **International Paper Co.** agreed to pay \$5.2 million when one of its employees in Georgia was talking on a cell phone and caused an accident that led to an amputation.

Now, here's the good news for businesses: Compliance with the law is relatively easy and should involve minimal costs.

The state Department of Motor Vehicles has interpreted the law to mean that drivers can touch a phone to make or receive a telephone call. They just can't carry on a conversation while holding the phone to their ear.

That means drivers either will have to use their speaker phones to converse, or purchase a head set. And nearly all phones manufactured in the last three years have head set capability, according to David Nelson at Schooley Mitchell Telecom Consultants in Orange County.

Popular wireless Bluetooth headsets sell for \$70 to \$120, depending on the features. But regular wire headsets cost only \$15 to \$20, he said.

But there's a bit more to it than that.

The California Chamber of Commerce is recommending all companies inform their employees not to use handheld phones while driving and incorporate that prohibition into employee handbooks and training materials.

Also, companies should put a warning sticker on company



In the Clear: Motorist uses a cell phone earpiece.

company-issued cell phones should come with a headset as standard equipment.

These steps could help protect employers from lawsuits arising from their employees' illegal use of cell phones while driving, according to the Web site Safety Daily Advisor.

Surprisingly, the new law doesn't cover one of corporate America's favorite pastimes: sending and receiving e-mails over cell phones and devices like Blackberries. It also doesn't prohibit text messaging.

State Sen. Jo Simitian, D-Palo Alto, who authored the law, has said he didn't include the e-mail and text messaging prohibition, because it was hard enough getting the Legislature to pass the hands-free law. Even so, Nelson said he considers activities such as text messaging more dangerous than talking on a cell phone without a head set.

Chris Pennell, president of Ligature, a Vernon-based commercial printer, said he hasn't raised the issue of the hands-free law with his employees, but he plans to do so and create a company policy.