



Distracted Driving Safety

How to Prevent Driving Distractions

What is the Problem?

In the United States, at any given daylight moment, approximately 660,000 drivers are using cell phones or manipulating electronic devices while driving (a number that has held steady since 2010).¹ Distracted driving is attributable to car accidents every day and one of the primary preventable causes of injury. Sending or receiving a text takes a driver's eyes from the road for an average of 4.6 seconds, the equivalent-at 55 mph-of driving the length of an entire football field, blind.² In 2011, 3,331 people were killed in crashes involving a distracted driver, compared to 3,267 in 2010.³ An additional, 387,000 people were injured in motor vehicle crashes involving a distracted driver in 2011, compared to 416,000 people injured in 2010⁴



Who is at Risk?

Younger, inexperienced drivers under the age of 20 may be at increased risk; they have the highest proportion of distraction-related fatal crashes.⁵ Texting while driving is linked with drinking and driving or riding with someone who has been drinking among high school students in the United States, according to a CDC study that analyzed self-report data from the 2011 national Youth Risk Behavior Survey.⁶

Prevention Tips

Motor vehicle accidents due to distracted driving are completely preventable. Utilize the following tips below to drive more safely:

- Do not use a cell phone while operating a motor vehicle.⁷
- Leave grooming to before or after transit, not during driving activity.⁸
- Do not eat while driving, as it may reduce the manual and visual accuracy of driving effectiveness.⁹
- Pre-plan your trip before you go, so that the navigation or mapped routes for transit will not be a distraction while driving.¹⁰



Plan of the Week (POW):

Distracted driving incidents can be widely reduced with a renewed focus on the task at hand. **ALWAYS** remember to turn off cell phones and drive well rested and cognizant of other motor vehicle operators.¹¹ Service members and commercial vehicle operators are required, by law, to operate a vehicle while on the job without distraction.¹² Texting while driving could result in legal and costly consequences if ignored.¹³ **PREVENT** distraction by focusing on areas that include: visual, cognitive and manual operator performance of a motor vehicle to reach your destination safely.¹⁴

References

- 1, 12, 13 Pickrell, T.M. & Ye, T.J. (2013 March). Driver Electronic Use in 2011. Report no. DOT HS 811 719. Washington, D.C.: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.
- 2, 7-11, 14 US Department of Transportation – Official US Government Website for Distracted Driving. What is Distracted Driving? <http://www.distraction.gov/content/get-the-facts/facts-and-statistics.html>. Updated 14 May 2009. Accessed 24 August 2013.
- 3-6 Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Distracted Driving. http://www.cdc.gov/Motorvehiclesafety/Distracted_Driving/. 23 May 2013. Accessed 24 August 2013.

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NMCPHC Injury Prevention and Violence Free Living Webpage

<http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/health-promotion/injury-violence-free-living/Pages/injury-violence-free-living.aspx>

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