

# Distracted Driving

Distracted driving is one of the fastest growing safety issues on the roads today. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), driver distraction is the leading factor in most crashes. Nearly 80 percent of crashes and 65 percent of near-crashes involve some form of distraction within three seconds before the event.

## What is distracted driving?

According to NHTSA, distracted driving is any non-driving activity a person engages in that has the potential to distract from the primary task of driving and increase the risk of crashing.

There are three main types of distractions:

- ▶ Visual — taking your eyes off the road
- ▶ Manual — taking your hands off the wheel
- ▶ Cognitive — taking your mind off what you're doing

While all distractions can endanger drivers' safety, texting is the most alarming because it involves all three types of distraction.

## Law bans texting while driving



House Bill 415, signed into law on April 15, 2010, bans texting for drivers of all ages while the vehicle is in motion. **For drivers 18 and over**, it allows the use of global positioning devices and reading, selecting or entering a telephone number or name for the purpose of making a call.

**For drivers under 18**, no use of personal communication devices is allowed while the vehicle is in motion. The use of a global positioning system is allowed, but manually entering information must be completed while the vehicle is stopped.

If the cell phone rings while driving, safely pull off the roadway, ask a passenger to handle the call, or allow voice mail to answer and return all calls when it is safe and convenient.

### Did you know?



**Driving while using a cell phone reduces the amount of brain activity associated with driving by 37 percent.** (Source: Carnegie Mellon)

**If you are over 18, use good judgment if using a cell phone while driving.** Tell the caller you may have to end the conversation.

- ▶ Position your phone within easy reach.
- ▶ Dial numbers while you are not moving.
- ▶ Do not engage in stressful or emotional conversations while driving.

### Did you know?



**Hand-held or hands-free cell phone use while driving delays reaction time as much as having a blood alcohol concentration at the legal limit of .08 percent.** (Source: University of Utah)

# What causes driver distraction?

- ▶ Reaching for an object
- ▶ Talking or listening to passengers
- ▶ Reading and/or writing
- ▶ Eating, drinking or smoking
- ▶ Grooming
- ▶ Use of electronic devices or music controls



# Children can be a distraction


- ▶ Always properly restrain children in the back seat.



- ▶ Make sure the harness straps are snug to keep the child properly positioned in the seat.
- ▶ Stop the car in a safe place if your child gets out of the car seat or seat belt and refuse to move until the child obeys. Be calm but firm, and praise the child when he/she rides quietly and stays restrained.
- ▶ Bring something for everyone to do, such as soft toys or books.

- ▶ Play children's music or stories.
- ▶ Stop often for children to run around and stretch.

## Did you know?

 **Kids are four times more distracting than adults as passengers and infants are eight times more distracting.** (Source: AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety)

# Pets can be a distraction

- ▶ Never drive with your animal seated in your lap or roaming freely.
- ▶ Gate, cage or secure your pet with a harness system.
- ▶ Give your pet a toy or bone to keep it busy.
- ▶ Keep the temperature in the car comfortable.
- ▶ Make frequent stops on long trips for bathroom breaks and stretching.



## For additional information:

- **AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety:** [www.aaafoundation.org](http://www.aaafoundation.org)
- **Community for Accredited Online Schools—End Student Distracted Driving:** <https://www.accreditedschoolsonline.org/resources/students-distracted-driving/>
- **National Safety Council:** [www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org)
- **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:** <http://distraction.gov>