



RESOURCES

Insurance Institute for Highway Safety

IIHS.org

Distracted Driving Info from The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Distraction.gov

Department of Transportation

www.nhtsa.dot.gov

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Driving Distracted



In many states, counties and cities it's illegal to talk on a cellular phone while driving. Even more places ban talking without a hands-free device. Bans on texting while driving are becoming more commonplace as well. But why?

Distracted Driving Kills

Studies show that talking on a cell phone is distracting to the driver, leads to accidents and increases the severity of an accident. Studies also show that it makes no difference whether or not the driver was using a hands-free device, talking with the cell phone pinned between shoulder and ear or texting.

A 2009 study that measured drivers' reaction time and stopping distance showed that driving was seriously impaired by in-person conversation to the

same degree as cell phone conversations with and without hands-free devices.

Why is that? Because if you are concentrating on something other than driving while you're behind the wheel you won't react quickly or properly when it's needed most. Simple tasks can become simply tragic. Changing lanes means hitting another vehicle. Approaching a traffic light means killing a pedestrian. A curve means running off the road.

Simply put: Distracted driving kills.

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When Driving, Drive

Think about it. If there were a poisonous snake loose in your car, would you remember to use your blinker to change lanes and stick to the speed limit? Of course not! You'd remember to get the heck out of the car!

According to the National Highway Safety Commission 16% of all fatal car crashes and 21% of all injury-causing car crashes were due to distracted driving.

Of course most drivers don't have to worry about getting bitten by a poisonous snake, but there are common distractions that often lead to collisions and injuries:

- Looking for something outside the car
- Dealing with children or other passengers
- Looking for something inside the car
- Cell phone use
- Another driver's behavior
- Personal thoughts
- An animal outside the car
- Technology – primarily radio
- Other distractions – eating, drinking, smoking and grooming

These activities all have one thing in common: They're not driving. When you get into the driver's seat you should have only one goal—to drive safely. If you have something on your mind, clear it. If you're in the middle of a conversation, end it. If you're on the phone, hang up and turn it off.

Have your directions available and, if you need them, pull over to check them. Make sure that you're on a straight road with no one around before adjusting any controls. If you're tired, pull over. Remember, above all other things, **your only job is to drive.**

If you have to do *anything* else—deal with passengers or children, eat anything that requires attention, groom yourself, reach for anything or calm down from stress—pull over. Get to the side of the road and deal with your issue before you get back on the road. There's **no room** behind the wheel for anything but driving.

Texting: The Perfect Distraction

According to Distraction.gov there are three types of distracted driving:

Visual—taking your eyes off the road.

Manual—taking your hands off the wheel.

Cognitive—taking your mind off what you're doing.

Texting is the perfect distraction because it combines all three. You're **thinking** about a message, **holding** the phone and **looking** at the screen. You do all this while the car is moving fast enough to cause a fatal crash. Oh, you only text while going slowly? Even a 10 MPH accident can cause death.

The Alcoholic Phone

.08% BAC is legally too drunk to drive. When you have that much alcohol in your blood stream your behavior and abilities are strongly affected. You become moody, overemotional, easily angered

Drivers who use hand-held devices are four times as likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves. – Insurance Institute for Highway Safety



Using a cell phone use while driving, hand-held or hands-free, delays a driver's reactions as much as having a BAC at the legal limit of .08 percent. – University of Utah

and more likely to make bad decisions. Your depth perception becomes much worse, your peripheral vision – the ability to see what's next to you – also gets worse, and the time it takes to recover from the glare of bright lights increases. Think about how that affects the ability to drive. Amazingly, picking up a cell phone while driving is almost as dangerous!

The studies speak for themselves: **Don't chat and drive!**

A Safe Car

There are some things you can do to make your driving experience safe:

- Park the phones: Turn off your phone and drop it in the glove compartment. Ask everyone else to at least silence their phones.
- Choose a good playlist or radio station and leave it on. Messing with music is not driving!
- Ask yourself, do I need the bathroom? Am I sleepy? Hyper? You don't want to be distracted by your body or mind. Make sure you can focus, even if it's just a trip around the block.

- Respect your driving limits. Driving at a speed, and in a manner, that you feel comfortable will help keep you in control in an unexpected situation.
- Keep your car uncluttered: You don't need anything bumping your ankles or rolling around your field of vision. You definitely do not want to have to reach for something while driving, or look away from the road to find out what's on the other seat!

Follow these simple rules and make sure your friends do as well. If you have passengers they need to remember not to distract the driver.

Driving means driving. It doesn't mean eating, chatting, texting or throwing a radio concert. Keep your mind and your eyes on the road and your hands on the wheel, and you'll keep you, your loved ones and those around you safe.

**Don't be distracted:
Drive safely.**

