The Dangers of Distracted Driving

The popularity of mobile devices has had some unintended and sometimes deadly consequences. An alarming number of traffic accidents are linked to driving while distracted, including use of mobile devices while driving, resulting in injury and loss of life. The most recent national statistics are sobering.

- According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 3,166 people were killed by distracted driving in 2017 alone, 8.5 percent of total fatalities for the year.
- Approximately nine people are killed and more than 1,000 injured daily in the United States in incidents reported as involving a distracted driver, the CDC reports.
- During daylight hours across America, approximately 481,000 drivers are using cell phones while driving, the NHTSA reports.
- Teens were the largest age group reported as distracted at the time of fatal crashes, according to the National Occupant Protection Use Survey.

What you can do to help

Give clear instructions – Give new drivers simple, clear instructions not to use their wireless devices while driving. Before new drivers get their licenses, discuss the fact that taking their eyes off the road – even for a few seconds – could cost someone injury or even death.

Lead by example – No one should text and drive. Be an example for others and if you need to text or talk on the phone, pull over to a safe place. Set rules for yourself and your household regarding distracted driving.

Become informed and be active – Tell family, friends and organizations to which you belong about the importance of driving without distractions. Take information to your kids’ schools and ask that it be shared with students and parents.

State laws

Currently there is no national ban on texting or using a wireless phone while driving, but a number of states have passed laws banning texting or wireless phones or requiring hands-free use of wireless phones while driving.

- 16 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam ban drivers from hand-held device use.
- 38 states and D.C. ban all cell phone use by novice drivers, and 21 states and D.C. prohibit it for school bus drivers.
- 47 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam ban texting while driving.

Some localities have additional regulations on distracted driving.

For more information on state laws, visit www.ghsa.org/html/stateinfo/laws/cellphone_laws.html.
For more information

For more information and statistics about wireless devices and driving, visit https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/distracted-driving.

Consumer Help Center

For more information on other consumer issues, visit the FCC’s Consumer Help Center at www.fcc.gov/consumers.

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Last Reviewed: 4/8/19