



The Dangers of Distracted Driving

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

- More than nine percent of fatal crashes in the United States in the past seven years involved a distracted driver, according to data from the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#).
- More than 2,800 people were killed as a result of distracted driving in 2018, the latest year for data reported by the NHTSA.
- An estimated 400,000 people were injured in crashes involving distracted drivers in 2018.
- A National Occupant Protection Use Survey reports that handheld cell phone use continues to be highest among 16-24-year-old drivers.

How can you 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 how taking their eyes off the road – even for a few seconds – could cause 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.

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

State laws

Currently there is no national ban on texting or using a wireless phone while driving, but state laws and fines are becoming more aggressive in efforts to thwart distracted drivers:

- 21 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam banned all drivers from hand-held phone use while driving;
- 48 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam banned texting while driving for all drivers;
- 39 states and the District of Columbia prohibits all cell phone use by novice drivers
- 20 states and the District of Columbia prohibit school bus drivers from cell phone use while driving

For more information on state laws, visit the [Governors Highway Safety Association](#).



Consumer Help Center

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

Alternate formats

To request this article in an alternate format - braille, large print, Word or text document or audio - write or call us at the address or phone number at the bottom of the page, or send an email to fcc504@fcc.gov.

Last Reviewed: 05/26/20

