



Distracted Driving Talking Points

- A Virginia Tech study showed that of crash and near-crash occurrences, 80 percent of all crashes, and 65 percent of all near crashes involved a distracted driving incident within 3 seconds of the event.
- While 80 percent of crashes are related to driver inattention, there are certain activities that may be more dangerous than using a cell phone, such as:
 - Reaching for a moving object 9 times increase in crash risk
 - Driving drowsy 5 times increase in crash risk
 - Looking at an external object 4 times increase in crash risk
 - Reading 3 times increase in crash risk
 - Dialing a phone 3 times increase in crash risk
 - Applying makeup 3 times increase in crash risk

However, cell phone use occurs more frequently and for longer durations than other risk behaviors, such as those listed above. Therefore, the frequency and longevity of cell phone use behind the wheel makes this activity the #1 source of driver inattention behind the wheel. (Virginia Tech 100-car study for National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA))

- Distracted driving may be defined as anything that takes your eyes and/or mind off of the road.
- Drivers who use cell phones are four times more likely to be in a crash while using a cell phone. (1997 *New England Journal of Medicine* examination of hospital records and 2005 Insurance Institute for Highway Safety study linking crashes to cell phone records).
- There is no difference in the cognitive distraction between hand-held and hands-free devices. (Simulator studies at the U. of Utah.)
- The Wireless Association reports 270 million cell phone subscribers. A Nationwide Insurance public opinion poll showed 81 percent of the public admit to talking on a cell phone while driving, which translates to estimates of more than 200 million people using cell phones while driving.
- The annual cost of crashes caused by cell phone use is estimated to be \$43 billion (Harvard Center for Risk Analysis).

- Talking to a passenger while driving is significantly safer than talking on a cell phone. (University of Utah)
- According to the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, distracted driving is the number one killer of American teens. Alcohol-related crashes among teens have dropped, but teenage traffic fatalities have remained unchanged because distracted driving is on the rise.
- While over 90 percent of teen drivers say they don't drink and drive, nine out of ten say they've seen passengers distracting the driver, or drivers using cell phones. (National Teen Driver Survey)
- So, while studies show that drivers on mobile phones are more impaired than drivers that are legally intoxicated, apparently that message has not reached our teen population.
- Insanely enough, more than 80 percent of drivers admit to having done blatantly hazardous behavior behind the wheel, such as change clothes, steer with their feet, painting nails and shaving. (Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company)
- Texting behind the wheel is 50 percent more dangerous than talking on a cell phone while driving (University of Utah)
- A person talking on a cell phone is FOUR times more likely to get into a crash than someone driving without distraction from the phone. For someone texting when driving, the likelihood is SIX times higher (University of Utah)
- A Harris Poll determined that 9 out of 10 American adults believe that sending text messages while driving is distracting, dangerous and should be outlawed.
- According to that same Harris Poll, 57 percent of those surveyed admitted to sending text messages while driving. In the age group of 18 to 34, that number rose to 72 percent.
- According to SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) and Liberty Mutual Insurance, instant and text messaging while driving leads the list as the biggest distraction while driving.
- More than 1 trillion text messages were sent worldwide last year. More than 75 billion messages were sent in June 2008 alone, which is a 160 percent increase over the prior year. (International Association for the Wireless Telecommunications Industry)
- As of June 2008, 85 percent of the American population had a wireless device. (International Association for the Wireless Telecommunications Industry)