



## Distracted Driving A Clear and Present Danger

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### Overview

- What
- Who
- Why
- Where
- When
- How



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### WHAT IS DISTRACTED DRIVING?

Anything that diverts a driver's attention away from the primary task of safely driving a vehicle.

Distraction categories/types:

- **Physical** – takes your eyes off the road and/or your hands off the controls.
- **Mental** – takes your mind off the job of driving.
- **Combination** – both physical and mental elements.
  - ◆ Your vehicle is on “auto-pilot” – minus the pilot!

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### INSIDE THE VEHICLE

- Radios / CD Players / MP3 Players
- Cell phones\*
- GPS systems\*
- Passengers / Children
- Eating / Grooming
- Controls / Gauges

\* Will address in further detail

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### OUTSIDE THE VEHICLE

- Traffic
- Crashes
- Other drivers
- Traffic control devices
- Billboards / Advertising
- Pedestrians

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### HOW DISTRACTIONS AFFECT DRIVING

- Change Blindness – Failure to notice visual change unless you actually see the change occur
- Failure to recognize potential hazards
- Decreased scanning of the road and mirror use
- Reduced “margin of safety”

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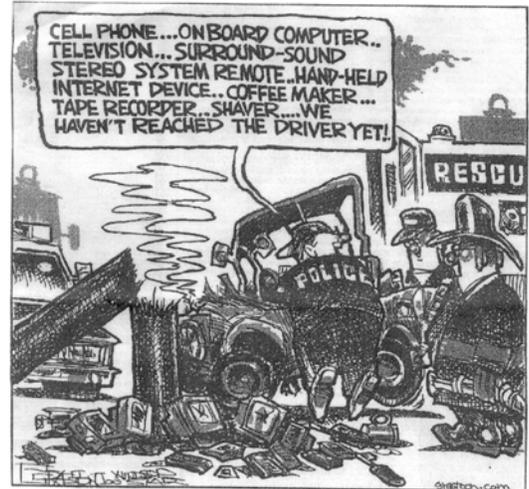
## THREE SECONDS

- The length of time for the typical distraction
- Enough time for a vehicle going 68 mph to travel the length of a football field



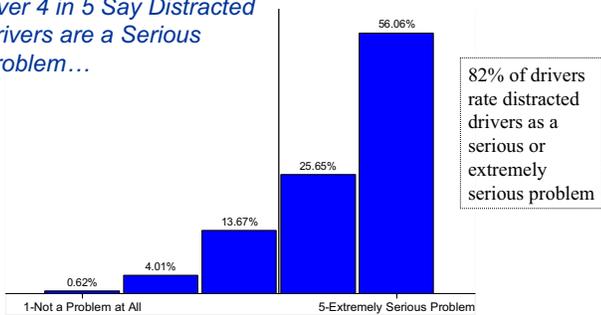
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## CULTURE OF DISTRACTED DRIVING

*Over 4 in 5 Say Distracted Drivers are a Serious Problem...*



82% of drivers rate distracted drivers as a serious or extremely serious problem

Q: How serious of a problem are distracted drivers?

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## CULTURE OF DISTRACTED DRIVING

- North Dakota Survey (AAA - 2008)
  - ♦ Top three safety concerns:
    - Distracted Drivers
    - Drunk Drivers
    - Aggressive Drivers
  - ♦ Top three driver distractions:
    - Talking on hand-held cell phones
    - Text messaging
    - Searching for something in vehicle
  - ♦ Make texting-driving illegal? 90%

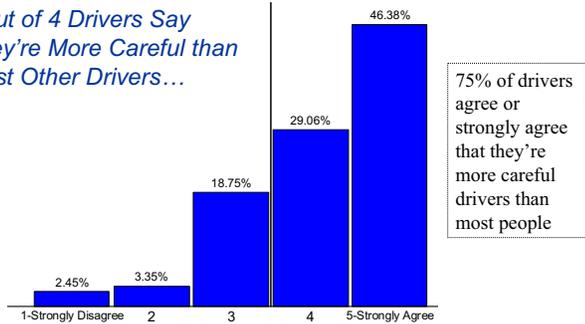
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## CULTURE OF DISTRACTED DRIVING

*3 out of 4 Drivers Say They're More Careful than Most Other Drivers...*



75% of drivers agree or strongly agree that they're more careful drivers than most people

Agree or Disagree: "I am a more careful driver than most people"

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## CULTURE OF DISTRACTED DRIVING

- Yet:
  - ♦ More than 2 in 3 drivers talk on their cell phone while driving
  - ♦ About 1 in 5 drivers admits to texting or e-mailing while driving
  - ♦ Many drivers don't perceive social disapproval from others (believe others approve)

More than half of all drivers say driving feels less safe today than it did 5 years ago, a 17-percentage-point increase from only a year ago. Nearly half cite some form of driver distraction as the main reason or as a reason for feeling less safe.

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety (2010)

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## CULTURE OF DISTRACTED DRIVING - TEENS

The age group with the greatest proportion of distracted driver fatalities is the under-20 age group.

- 2010 AAA/*Seventeen* magazine study:
  - ◆ Almost nine in 10 teenage drivers (86%) have driven while distracted, even though 84 percent of teen drivers know it's dangerous.
  - ◆ 4 out of 10 have been afraid they were going to get hurt as a passenger of distracted driver
  - ◆ More than a third say they've been involved in a near-crash because of their own or someone else's distracted driving.

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## CULTURE OF DISTRACTED DRIVING - TEENS

- Reasons teen drivers think it's fine to engage in distractions:
  - ◆ Action will only take a split second (41%)
  - ◆ Don't think they'll get hurt (35%)
  - ◆ Used to multitasking (34%)
  - ◆ Nothing bad will happen (32%)



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## MAGNITUDE OF DISTRACTED DRIVING PROBLEM

- In 2008, almost 20% of crashes involved some type of distraction (NHTSA)
- North America: More than 4 million collisions a year or 11,000 per day. (NHTSA)
  - ◆ Economic impact estimated at \$40 billion/year
- Nearly 80% of crashes and 65% of near crashes involve some sort of driver inattention with 2 seconds before the event.
  - ◆ Primary causes: distracted activities and drowsiness (Va. Tech Trans Institute/NHTSA naturalistic study; 1/100)

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## CELL PHONES OFTEN BLAMED

- Readily visible to other drivers
- Cell phones are just one of many driver distractions
- Difficult to determine if other distracted drivers are talking to a passenger, tuning the radio, eating, daydreaming, etc.

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## PERHAPS WITH GOOD REASON

- It's the conversation, NOT the phone
- Research shows no difference between hand-held and hands-free cell phones while driving - both increase risk
- The distraction is not the physical act of using the phone but the cognitive process of talking, thinking and trying to drive – mental blindness
- Reaction time is reduced by 20% - hand held and hands free

**'Hands Free' is not Risk Free**

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## TEXTING & DRIVING

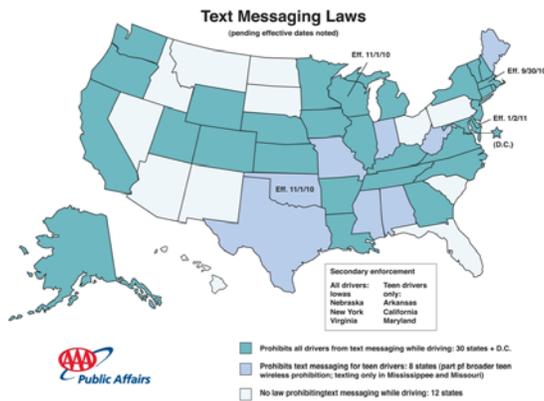
- The eyes-off-the-road aspect of reading and writing text messages adds a significant element of danger beyond the safety risk of cell phone use by drivers.
  - ◆ Taking eyes off the road for two seconds doubles risk of a crash
- Drivers who are text messaging are 6 times more likely to crash than drivers talking on a cell phone.
- Text messaging causes reaction times to decline by 35% and steering control by 91%.
- Recent reports show that public support for laws against text messaging while driving is generally high, ranging between 80-97%
  - ◆ ND survey: 90%

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## STATE LAWS MAP



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## STATE LAW LIMITATIONS

- Simply passing a law doesn't change behavior
  - ◆ Real improvements require well-written laws with significant penalties that are enforced visibly and consistently
- Impact on crash totals is not immediate
  - ◆ Requires public outreach campaigns, visible enforcement strategies, and properly crafted laws

Past Examples: Child Safety Seats, Seatbelts, Drunk Driving Laws

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## NAVIGATION DEVICES

- Reduce confusion in unfamiliar areas
- Less distracting than attempting to check a map
- Improve night driving safety
- Aid in determining which lane to be in
- Safety features – voice, service icons, location ID

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## NAVIGATION DEVICE TIPS

- Don't program the GPS while moving
- Learn to rely on the voice directions
- Mount the device away from driving sight lines
- Don't be "distracted" by the device

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## THE SIMPLE FACTS ARE

- The less time you spend focused on the task of driving, the more you increase your exposure to crash risk and increase creating a distraction for other drivers.
- You may *think* you can control your vehicle while multi-tasking, but you certainly cannot control the actions of *other* drivers.

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## MANAGING DISTRACTIONS

- Recognize that driving requires your full attention
- Best practice is to pull over to a safe and legal location if you must make or take a call
- Use your cell phone only if necessary...and familiarize yourself with the phone features ahead of time
- Have your passenger place the call for you
- Give yourself a break and stop to eat – don't eat while driving

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## MANAGING DISTRACTIONS

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- Get plenty of rest – don't drive drowsy
- Program your GPS before putting the vehicle in drive
- Only read/write when vehicle is safely stopped
- Do your grooming before you leave the house
- Settle on one radio station for the trip or pre-load CDs
- Allow plenty of time for your commute
- Don't condone unsafe actions of others
- Always Buckle Up – Your Best Defense

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## BE A ROLE MODEL

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- Set a good example for anyone who rides in your vehicle...especially impressionable young people who are influenced by your behavior



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## DISTRACTED DRIVING

**A Clear and Present Danger**

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