

# DISTRACTED DRIVING: Setting the Stage



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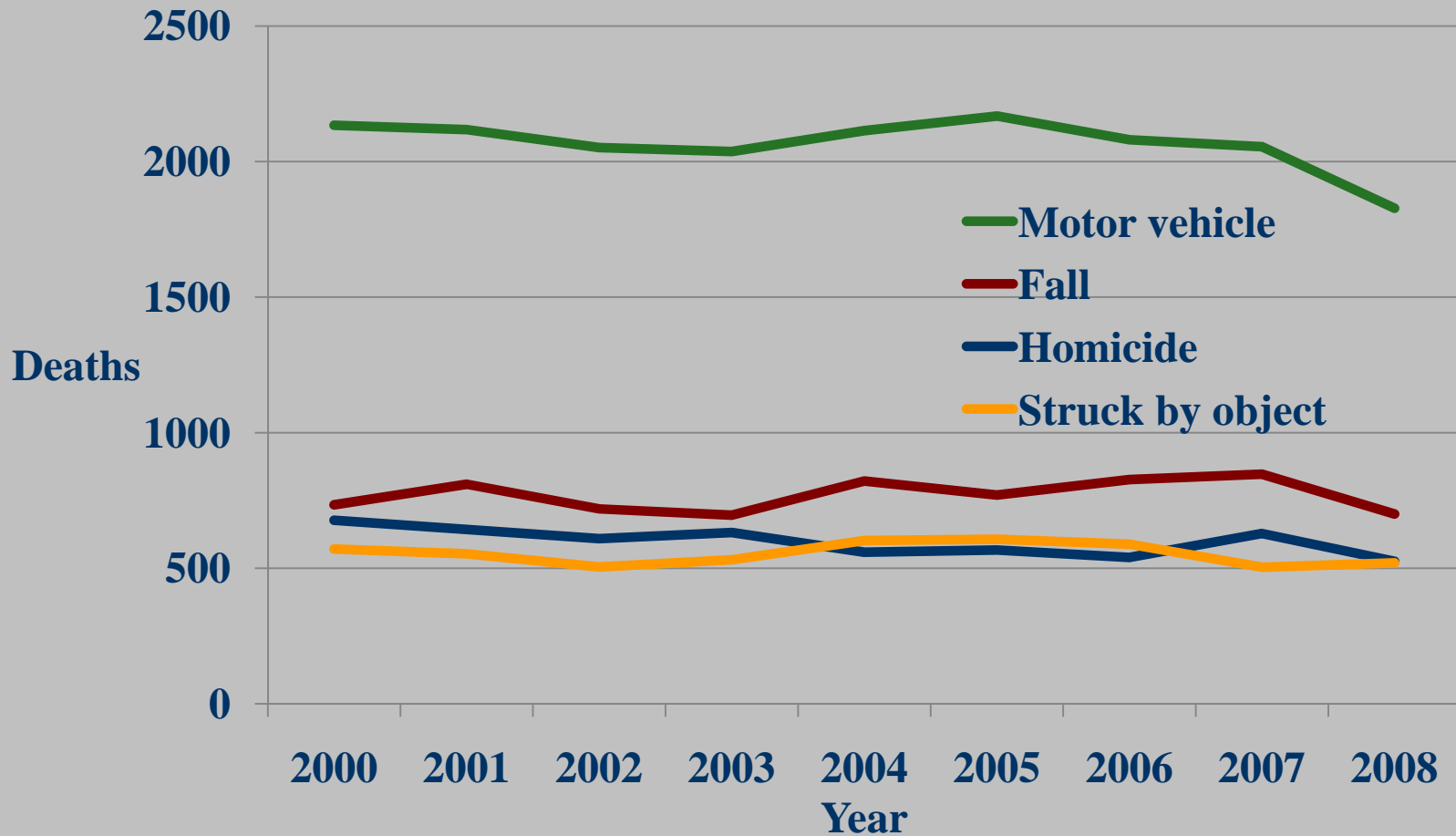
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# Leading causes of occupational fatalities, U.S., 2000-2008



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries. <http://stats.bls.gov>



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# Defining “Distracted Driving”

“While drowsiness and daydreaming can be categorized as inattention, the term *distraction* ... is a specific type of inattention that occurs when drivers divert their attention away from the driving task to focus on another activity instead.”

**Distractions may be:**

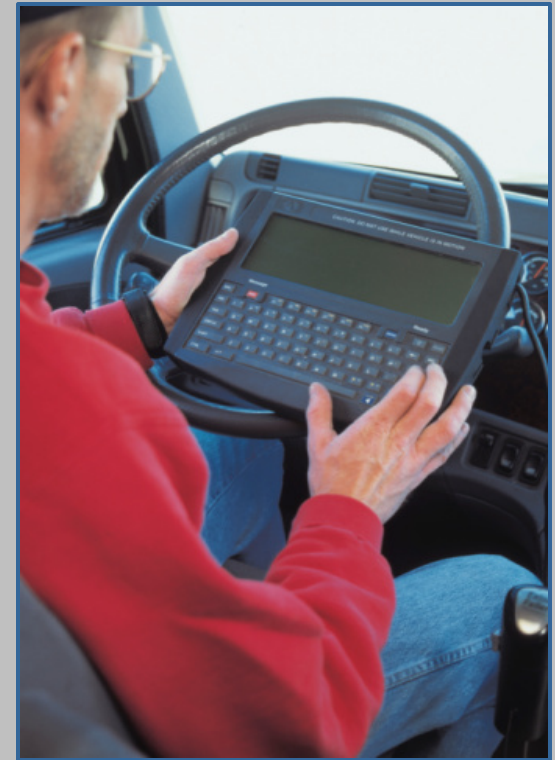
- **Visual**
- **Manual**
- **Cognitive**



Source: NHTSA (2010). Overview of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s Distracted Driving Program

# Work-related Distractions

- **Unique to the work environment:**
  - Portable or vehicle-mounted devices used for dispatching, or for tracking client contacts or inventory
- **Magnified by the work environment:**
  - Schedule or delivery pressures that create incentives for multi-tasking: eating and drinking, grooming, phone calls
  - Pre-occupation with job tasks



# Distraction Risk: Cell Phones



- **Worker's pickup truck traveling in wrong lane**
- **Call records showed evidence of cell phone use at time of crash**

# Distraction Risk: Adjusting Vehicle Controls



- **Flooring installer in Washington state**
- **Driver looked down to change radio station**
- **Car swerved into oncoming traffic lane and struck a truck**

# Distraction Risk: Poorly Designed In-vehicle Systems



- **Volunteer fire captain killed in rollover**
- **Did not maintain control of vehicle**
  - **Accessing dispatch radio required more than 3-foot reach**
  - **Reaching radio required driver to unfasten safety belt**

# NIOSH Research in Motor Vehicle Safety

- **Truck driver safety:**
  - **National survey of truck drivers: Occupational injuries, health status and fatigue**
  - **Anthropometry: Truck drivers and cab workspace**
  - **Evaluation of truck driver training in India**
- **Ambulance and emergency responder safety:**
  - **Human factors research – patient compartment**
  - **Investigations of firefighter and EMS worker fatalities**
  - **Motor vehicle safety for law enforcement officers**
- **Survey of fleet management practices**
- **Global review of good practices**



# The NIOSH Center for Motor Vehicle Safety

- A “virtual center:”
  - Building on the existing NIOSH research program
  - Developing new program areas and partnerships
- For more information, contact Stephanie Pratt, Coordinator, at [sgp2@cdc.gov](mailto:sgp2@cdc.gov)



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# Leadership for Prevent Distracted Driving in the Workplace

- **From government:**
  - **Presidential Executive Order banning text-messaging by Federal employees driving on official business**
  - **Department of Transportation:**
    - **Secretary Ray LaHood: Priority area for DOT and national Summits on distracted driving**
    - **FMCSA: Text-messaging ban for commercial motor vehicle drivers and rulemaking on cell phones**
  - **Department of Labor: OSHA initiative on text-messaging**

# Leadership for Preventing Distracted Driving in the Workplace

- **From employers, NGOs and labor:**
  - **NETS/NHTSA partnership for free downloads of campaign materials for employers ([www.trafficsafety.org](http://www.trafficsafety.org))**
  - **National Safety Council: Resources to build top management support and worker buy-in for distracted-driving policies**
  - **International Brotherhood of Teamsters: Communicated facts about distracted driving to membership**



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# Employer Policies are Crucial

**“Corporate cell phone policies are essential pieces of employee safety equipment.”**

**--Bill Windsor**

**Associate Vice-President, Nationwide Insurance  
Chairman, NETS**

- **Employers can set the standard for safe driving through distracted-driving policies, leading to safety benefits for both employees and family members.**



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# Employer Policies are Crucial (cont'd)

## TAKE HOME MESSAGE

**Driving is the primary task, and we will not compromise your safety by requiring or accepting the use of electronic devices (or other potential distractions) while you are performing that task.**



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# Challenge to Symposium Participants

- **Researchers and academics: What are the gaps in research that still need to be addressed?**
- **Policy makers: What evidence do you need to strengthen the laws or policies within your area of responsibility?**
- **Labor organizations: How can your membership work effectively with industry to reduce distracted driving?**



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# Challenge to Symposium Participants (cont'd)

- **Employers without distracted-driving policies: What do you need to convince you that these policies will protect your employees *and* make good business sense?**
- **Employers with distracted-driving policies: How can your experience be communicated more widely within the business community?**

# NIOSH Committees and Partnerships

- TRB committees: Vehicle User Characteristics, Highway Work Zone, Trucking Industry Research, Truck and Bus Safety, Travel Survey Methods
- Federal partners: FMCSA, NHTSA, FHWA, DHS, NIST
- ANSI Committees: Motor Vehicle Operations, Work Zone Safety
- Ambulance and truck design: NFPA 1917 Standard for Automotive Ambulances, six AMD and two SAE committees
- Network of Employers for Traffic Safety
- UN Road Safety Collaboration



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