Multi-tasking Behind the Wheel: New Hazards and Potential Public Health Solutions

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NHTSA Region 3
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Today’s Objectives

- Distracted driving - a national problem
- Continue to define distracted driving
- Best practices and strategies
  - What is NHTSA doing?
  - What can you do?
Distracted Driving Problem

• 18 percent of injury crashes in 2010 involved reports of distracted driving
• 18 percent of distracted driving fatal crashes involved a cell phone
• In 2011, 3,331 people were killed in distracted driving crashes (up from 3,267 in 2010)
• 11 percent of all drivers under 20 involved in fatal crashes were reported to have been distracted while driving
While driving do you...

• Think you can safely look away for >1 second?
• Eat, drink, shave or engage in personal activities?
• Text or talk on your cell phone?
• Answer your cell phone without stopping in a safe place?
• Adjust your seat, mirrors, A/C, GPS, radio or CD?
• Listen to anything that requires ear buds?
• Feel fatigued or drowsy?
• Try to deal with children or pets without stopping?
Risk Level:

• If you answered yes to *any* of those questions, you are at risk.
• Nearly 80% of all crashes and 65% of all near-crashes involved driver inattention during the last 3 seconds before the incident.
What is Distracted Driving?
Distracted Driving Defined

• Distraction is anything that can take away visual, manual, or cognitive resources from the driving task

• Three types of distraction
  ✓ Visual - eyes off the road
  ✓ Manual - hands off the wheel
  ✓ Cognitive - mind off the driving task
You’re four times more likely to have a crash when you’re on a mobile phone at the same time.
Texting is one of the riskiest forms of distraction because it combines all 3 types: manual, visual, and cognitive distraction.
# Distracted Driving

## Equal Opportunity Problem

Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes by Sex, Age, and Vehicle 2004 - 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Drivers</th>
<th>Distracted Drivers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N 281,666</td>
<td>N 25,641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% 9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Drivers by Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Drivers</th>
<th>Distracted Drivers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>205,689</td>
<td>18,611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>71,948</td>
<td>6,936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% 9%</td>
<td>% 10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Drivers by Age Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Total Drivers</th>
<th>Distracted Drivers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;20</td>
<td>28,237</td>
<td>3,370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>68,997</td>
<td>6,672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>49,696</td>
<td>4,307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>50,184</td>
<td>4,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>37,577</td>
<td>3,073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>20,829</td>
<td>1,785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70+</td>
<td>21,505</td>
<td>2,055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% 12%</td>
<td>% 8%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% 10%</td>
<td>% 9%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% 8%</td>
<td>% 9%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% 10%</td>
<td>% 6%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Drivers by Vehicle Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vehicle Type</th>
<th>Total Drivers</th>
<th>Distracted Drivers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passenger</td>
<td>117,825</td>
<td>10,394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car</td>
<td>108,261</td>
<td>10,697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Truck</td>
<td>23,084</td>
<td>1,854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Truck</td>
<td>24,445</td>
<td>2,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motorcycle</td>
<td>1,383</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus</td>
<td></td>
<td>% 9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>% 10%</td>
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<td>% 6%</td>
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</table>
What can we do?
States can and should take four steps that will help reduce distracted driving:

• Continue to implement effective low-cost roadway distracted driving countermeasures such as edgeline and centerline rumble strips.
• Record distracted driving in crash reports to the extent possible, to assist in evaluating distracted driving laws and programs.
• Monitor the impact of existing hand-held cell phone bans.
• Evaluate other distracted driving laws and programs. Evaluation will provide the information states need on which countermeasures are effective and which are not.
Distracted Driving Laws
Cell phone and texting laws in the U.S.

No State completely bans all types of cell phone use (handheld and hands free) for all drivers, but many prohibit cell phone use by some drivers.

For the most up to date information, visit: http://www.ghsa.org/html/stateinfo/laws/cellphone_laws.html
DOT Activities

- Public Awareness Campaign
- Federal Employee Texting Ban
- Federal Ban on Texting for Commercial Truck Drivers
- NHTSA Driver Distraction Program Plan

“Every time we climb into the driver’s seat, we all have a responsibility for keeping our roads safe by putting away cell phones and other distractions.”

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood
Distracted Driving Messaging

- Social norming
  - Put it down
- Enforcement
  - Phone in one hand, ticket in the other
NHTSA’s Driver Distraction Program Plan

• NHTSA goal - eliminate crashes due to distraction
Distracted Driving Initiative 1

• National Distracted Driving Survey

Examples: Improve police reporting, analyze additional crash data, continue observational awareness, hazard anticipation, and naturalistic studies, etc.
Distracted Driving Initiative 2
Reduce distraction from in-vehicle devices

- NHTSA will review the extent to which manufacturers are following basic human factors guidelines as well as guidelines put forth by the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers.

Example: Phase 1 Distraction Guidelines for devices integrated into vehicles.
Distracted Driving Initiative 3
Keep distracted drivers safe.

Example: Improve crash warning systems.
Example: Assess the effect of high visibility enforcement and targeted media campaigns.
Distracted Driving Enforcement Demonstration Projects

- High Visibility Enforcement (HVE) projects
  - HVE Model
    - Defined period of earned media
    - Defined period of paid media with enforcement message
    - Defined period of enforcement
    - Evaluation before, during, and after periods of publicity and enforcement

- Modeled after Click It or Ticket
Distracted Driving Enforcement Demonstration Projects (Cont’d)

- Projects took place in Syracuse, New York and the Hartford area of Connecticut
- Four waves of activity between April 2010 and April 2011
- Current high visibility anti-texting enforcement projects in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Delaware and California
Other Tools

- Research and data
- Sample texting law
- PSAs
- Law enforcement op-ed
- Radio liners
- School announcements
- Enforcement and social norming static billboards
- Enforcement online banners
- Posters and much more
So really….what can we do about distracted driving?

“You tell his mom you only looked down for a second.”
Work with Your Regional Traffic Safety Program Coordinators
TAKE THE PLEDGE!
And ask others to do so, too.

The fight to end distracted driving starts with you. Make the commitment to drive phone-free today.

Distracted driving kills and injures thousands of people each year. I pledge to:
• Protect lives by never texting or talking on the phone while driving.
• Be a good passenger and speak out if the driver in my car is distracted.
• Encourage my friends and family to drive phone-free.

SIGNATURE: ___________________________________________
DATE: _________________________________________________
What else can we do?

• Always wear your seat belt and require your passengers to do so, as well
• See if your employer has a distracted driving policy
• Never use your cell phone while driving
• Never speed