



## DISTRACTED DRIVING

Simply stated, “Distracted Driving” is any activity that causes your attention to wander on anything other than the task of driving. Distracted driving is a serious threat to all users of the road and highway system, and it happens all of the time. How many times have you noticed when another vehicle passes you, the person driving is staring at or otherwise using their cell phone? If we are all being honest, we would have to say a majority of the time.

Did you know that at 65 mph a vehicle travels 100 feet per second? If you are not paying attention to the road in front of you and are looking at your cell phone for say 3-5 seconds, you will travel 300-500 feet in that time. That is far too much distance to cover without paying attention and looking at the road. Distracted driving is one of the leading causes of rear-ends collisions. And with summer fast approaching, we must all consider families traveling on vacations. We mention families and vacation because 90% of the time the passengers in a family vehicle riding in the backseat are children. You never want to injury or kill anyone, but it is even more sobering to think of hurting a child. This alone should make all of us want to drive alert and aware of what is going on in and around our vehicles.

Here are some sobering statistics from 2016 on distracted driving.

### **Highway Fatalities:**

- 37,461 lives were lost on U.S. roads in 2016, an increase of 5.6% from 2015 (data not yet available for 2017-18).

### **Distracted Driving:**

- 10% of fatal crashes and 15% of injuries were related to distracted driving.
- Distracted driving crashes are under reported, and the National Safety Council estimates that nearly 27% of all car crashes were directly caused by cell phone use.
- In 2015 there were 3,744 people killed and it is estimated that an additional 391,000 people injured in crashes in 2015 were the result of distracted driving.
- The fatal crash rate for teens is 3 times higher than for drivers age 20 and older.
- Driver distractions are responsible for 58% percent of all crashes involving teenaged drivers.

There are three primary types of distracted driving; Manual, Visual, and Cognitive.

- Manual distractions involve a driver removing their hands from the steering wheel.
- Visual distractions involve focusing your eyes of the road.
- Cognitive distraction is when your mind wanders away from the task of driving.

TEXTING – involves all three primary types of distraction. Holding the phone, reading the text or what you may be entering, and thinking about the text rather than your driving. This is known as the triple threat.

**Cell Phone Use:**

- People are as impaired when they drive and use a cell phone as they are when they drive intoxicated at the legal blood alcohol limit of 0.08%.
- Cell phone users are 5.36 times more likely to get into an accident than a non-distracted driver.
- Texting increases the risk of a crash or near crash by 23 times.
- Sending or reading a text message will cause you to take your eyes off the road for roughly 5 seconds, long enough to cover a football field. Too long to be on auto-pilot.

Drivers are not taking cell phone distracted driving seriously enough. Did you know that over 84% of drivers recognize the danger from cell phone distractions and find it “unacceptable” that drivers text or send email while driving. Nevertheless, 36% of these same people admit to having read or sent a text message or e-mail while driving in the previous month. Does this make any kind of sense at all? No, it doesn't.

Let's all stop driving distracted, there is simply far too much at stake. We all need to use the road safely. Don't put yourself or others in jeopardy, drive alert and aware.