

DON'T TEXT & DRIVE!

Text messaging has increased 10,000-fold in the last decade. It's no surprise texting while driving is the fastest growing and most dangerous form of distracted driving. Each time you write or read a text message, you take your eyes off the road for almost five seconds and increase your risk of an accident up to 23 times.

BUT I DON'T USE GADGETS!

Distracted driving isn't just a matter of technology. Nearly every driver adjusts a knob, talks to a passenger or gets distracted at some point while driving. Driver inattention is a factor in more than 1 million crashes in the U.S. each year, or about one crash every 13 minutes. These accidents result in injuries, deaths and an economic impact that some experts say reaches nearly \$40 billion per year.

- **Shut it off.** Turn off your phone before you turn the key in the ignition so you won't be tempted to answer calls on the road.
- **Don't touch that dial.** Adjust seats, mirrors and other devices while the vehicle is stopped. Use pre-sets for radio and climate control.
- **Avoid eating and drinking on the run.** Fast food drive-thrus and cup holders make it tempting to grab a quick bite while driving, but steer clear of using your car as a dining spot.
- **If that call is so important, pull over.** When you're tempted to make a call while driving, ask yourself if this call is worth risking getting in an accident. If your call is really that important, pull off the road to a safe spot away from traffic.
- **Keep a safe distance.** Experts suggest the 4-second following rule to give you more time to react to what's happening on the road ahead of you.
- **Plan ahead.** Read maps and check traffic conditions before you leave. If you have a GPS, enter your destination before you start your trip.
- **Don't multitask and drive.** Driving is complicated enough. Don't use the mirrors for personal grooming. Don't try to write yourself a reminder while you're behind the wheel. Just drive.
- **Use your passenger power.** Don't be afraid to speak up if you are in a car with a multitasking driver. You have a right to look out for your own safety, as well as the safety of others on the road.



IT'S THE LAW

At least eight states and the District of Columbia have laws prohibiting all drivers from using handheld cell phones. Twenty-eight states and the District of Columbia ban cell phone use by novice drivers (under 18). Thirty states and the District of Columbia ban texting while driving — and more are expected to pass similar laws soon.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The National Safety Council estimates more than one in four car crashes involves cell phone use. More than 500,000 people were injured and nearly 6,000 people died in distracted driving crashes in 2008.

LEARN MORE

Insurance companies, government agencies and public health officials are spending millions of dollars educating drivers on safety behind the wheel. Check out these sites to learn more:

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety

aaafoundation.org

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

nhtsa.gov

National Safety Council

www.nsc.org

U.S. Department of Transportation

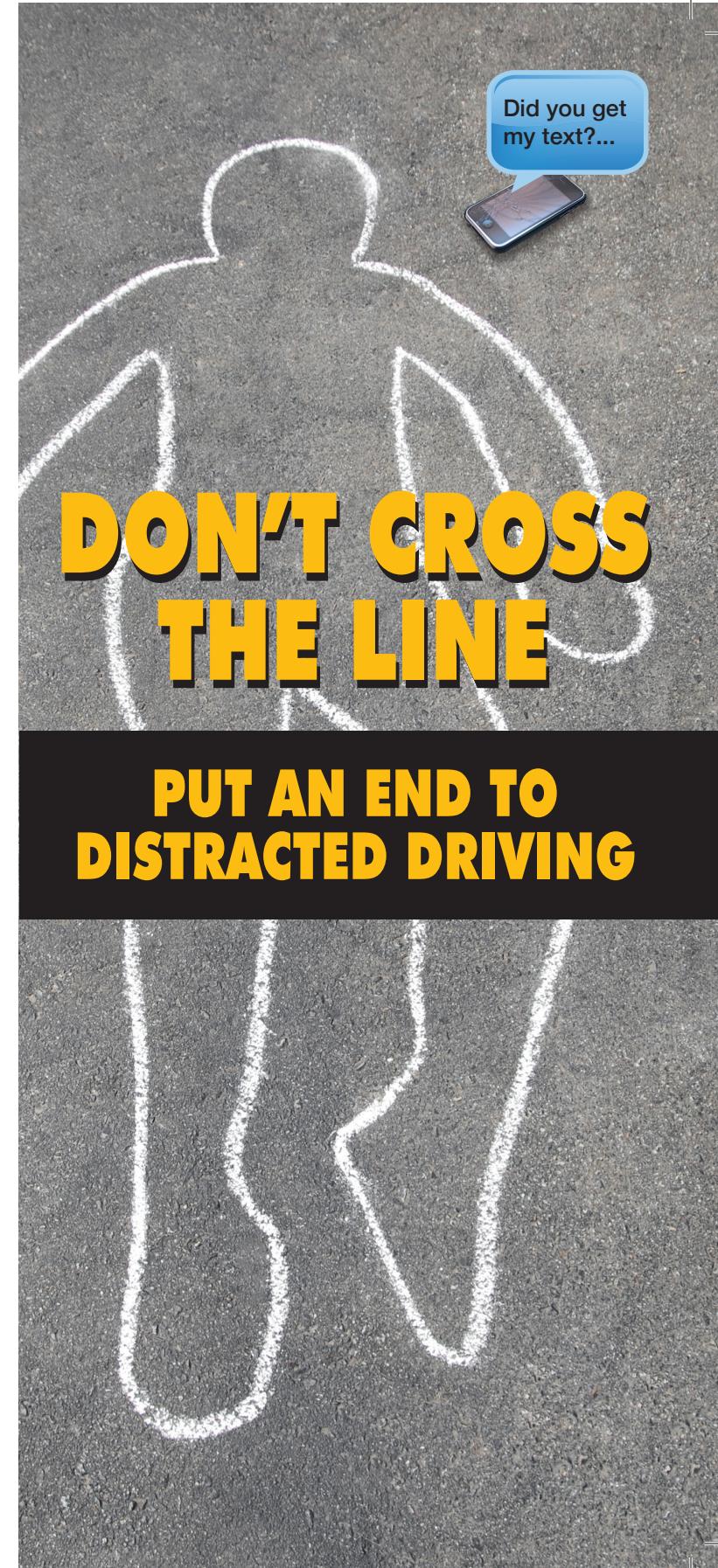
fastlane.dot.gov



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WHAT IS DISTRACTED DRIVING?

"Distracted driving" refers to driving a car while doing other things that keep you from paying full attention to the road, increasing your risk of a crash. Multitasking in a car may seem commonplace, but that doesn't make it harmless. Distracted driving is a very serious and growing danger to public safety. Activities that are considered distracted driving include:

- Eating or drinking
- Using a cell phone
- Applying makeup
- Switching radio stations
- Daydreaming
- Conversing with passengers
- Consulting a map
- Reading/writing a text message

THREE TYPES OF DISTRACTIONS

What do eating a donut, chatting with a passenger and changing the radio station have in common? Doing any of those things takes your focus away from driving. Researchers have determined there are three categories of distractions: physical, mental and combined.

Physical Distractions: Anything that causes you to take your eyes off the road or your hands off the steering wheel reduces your ability to control the car and quickly react to changing conditions.

Mental Distractions: Anything that lures your mind elsewhere while your body is behind the wheel. Whether you're talking with a passenger, mentally preparing a shopping list or listening to a radio announcer's description of a triple play — whenever your mind drifts away from the job of driving, you are sure to miss visual road cues that could keep you safe.

Combination Distractions: Some of the most dangerous distractions have both a physical and mental element. Using a cell phone and texting are among the most dangerous distractions because they require your eyes, your hands and your concentration.



SO MUCH TO DO, SO LITTLE TIME

Most of us multitask our way through each day. All kinds of gadgets help us accomplish more in less time, from laptops to PDAs. But when it comes to driving, you're already multitasking every time you're behind the wheel! All drivers are operating a piece of heavy machinery while:

- Traveling at high speeds
- Calculating distances
- Adjusting to road conditions
- Responding to other drivers
- Steering clear of obstacles



WHAT ARE THE ODDS?

The Virginia Tech Transportation Institute crunched the numbers to see which distracting behaviors held the greatest crash risk. The results:

Driving Behavior	Increased Crash Risk
Texting	23 times
Reaching for an object in the car	9 times
Using a cell phone	4 times*
Driving drowsy	4 times
Looking at an object outside the car	3.7 times
Reading	3.4 times
Applying makeup	3 times

*Since cell phone use occurs more frequently and for longer durations than other behaviors on the list, this is considered the NUMBER ONE source of driver inattention behind the wheel.

SPECIAL NOTE FOR TEENS

Teens are four times more likely to die in a car accident than any other group of drivers. In fact, car crashes are the leading cause of teen death in the United States today. Mile for mile, teens are involved in three times as many fatal crashes as all other drivers.

Drivers under 20 have the highest proportion of distraction-related fatal car crashes (16 percent). The next largest group of distracted drivers involved in fatal crashes is drivers in the 20 to 29 year old age group (12 percent). Nearly 66 percent of young people between 18 and 29 years of age admit texting while driving on a regular basis.

DO THE MATH

A recent poll indicates 98 percent of people consider themselves to be safe drivers, yet nearly 75 percent of them report they often perform other tasks while driving. In other words, most drivers assume it's safe to drive while distracted. A simple formula demonstrates why it's dangerous to take your eyes off the road, even for a second. Here's how to calculate how many feet your car will travel in a single second.

$$(MPH \text{ Speed} \times 5,280) / 3,600 = \text{Feet Per Second}$$



If you're driving at 65 mph, you are covering 95 feet per second! Would you want to be on the highway along with a few hundred blindfolded drivers? Neither does anyone else. Looking away from the road — at your dashboard, your cell phone or that soda can in your cup holder — could make the difference between arriving safely and becoming a statistic.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

In 1995, 13 percent of Americans owned cell phones. By 2009, the number had risen to 91 percent. A 2008 simulator study by the University of Utah's driving lab found 98 percent of drivers are not capable of driving safely while talking on the phone. Simply put, our brains are not wired to multitask while driving.

Although drivers talking on their cell phones look at the road ahead of them, they fail to see as much as 50 percent of what is occurring on the road. This is called "inattention blindness," and it happens to drivers using handheld and hands-free devices.

The same study compared drivers using cell phones and drivers impaired by alcohol. Cell phone users had reaction times similar to drivers with 0.08 percent BAC and slower reaction to vehicles braking in front of them. In other words, driving while talking on a cell phone is just as dangerous as driving while intoxicated!

