



HSS Safety Message



Summer Safety Message Distracted Driving

Distracted driving can be dangerous, but how do you stop a driver from fiddling with the stereo? How do you police someone checking his or her hair in the rearview mirror?

Gas is cheaper this year (it was more than \$4 last year), and a car trip over a long weekend is not as big a splurge as the big summer vacation that many are forgoing in hard economic times.

What's not to like? Not much. But this year, two standard road safety warnings — wear a seat belt, don't drink and drive — aren't enough. Add this: Don't text and drive.

Distraction occurs when a driver is delayed in the recognition of information needed to safely accomplish the driving task, because something within or outside the vehicle draws his attention away from driving. The presence of a triggering event distinguishes a distracted driver from one who is simply inattentive or "lost in thought." Many accidents are caused by actions as simple as tuning the radio or as innocent as glancing at a dog on the sidewalk. Carelessness or inattention - even for a second to change the radio station - causes more accidents than anything else.

A report by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) indicates that inattention caused 68% of rear-end crashes. Other kinds of crashes - backing up, lane changes and merging usually caused by a driver not recognizing an obstacle or by a driver failing to pay attention. Driver distractions or inattentive driving play a part in one out of every four motor vehicle crashes. That's more than 1.5 million collisions a year - more than 4,300 crashes each day!

Cell Phones

“Studies show that driving while talking on a cell phone is extremely dangerous and puts drivers at a four times greater risk of a crash,” said Janet Froetscher, president and CEO of the National Safety Council (NSC).

“Driving drunk is also dangerous and against the law. When our friends have been drinking, we take the car keys away. It's time to take the cell phone away.”

A study from the Harvard Center of Risk Analysis estimates that cell phone use while driving contributes to 6 percent of crashes, which equates to 636,000 crashes, 330,000 injuries, 12,000 serious injuries and 2,600 deaths each year. The study also put the annual financial toll of cell phone-related crashes at \$43 billion. Using a cell phone while driving increases your chance of getting into a crash by 400%.

Talking on a cell phone may be less distracting than some other activities people may engage in while driving, but the use of cell phones and texting devices is much more pervasive, making it more dangerous overall. The NSC also points to studies from researchers at the University of Utah that show that hands-free devices do not make cell phone calls while driving safe. Another study demonstrates that talking to passengers, as opposed to talking on a cell phone, actually makes adult drivers safer, because passengers help alert drivers to potential driving risks.

FACT: Most traffic accidents happen within 2 seconds.

Text Messaging or Tweeting

Text-messaging is the new scourge of the roads — overtaking the long-running debate over whether to restrict drivers' cellphone use. Twelve states and Washington, D.C., already ban text-messaging for all drivers. Ten more states ban it for novice drivers or those younger than 18.

Studies increasingly confirm what is in plain sight on too many roads. Texting while driving is distracting (far more so than cellphones) and potentially deadly. Especially for younger drivers, who are more tech-savvy and addicted to texting than older people. Even before texting arrived, teenagers were four times more likely to be involved in an automobile crash.

One new poll found that one in four people admitted to texting while driving, including two thirds of those ages

16-19. A recent study showed that teens slow down, weave in and out of lanes, and run over pedestrians when they texted while using a driving simulator. It's not hard to find news stories that blame deadly crashes on texting, distracted drivers — and not just on the road. Texting was blamed for a train crash in Los Angeles last year in which 25 people died.

Texting bans seem certain to spread, perhaps with impact similar to the annual summer "Click It or Ticket" campaign that has helped raise seat belt use from about 11% in the 1980s to 83% last year.

Meanwhile, a message to drivers: Leave texting or Tweeting to your passengers.

GPS Navigation Systems

An auto insurance company has noted that in-car GPS navigation systems might be doing more harm than good by distracting drivers. Even more surprising, the company's findings suggest that navigation systems could be more disruptive than trying to read a map at the wheel.

The findings showed that 19 percent of drivers, who used their GPS lost concentration while driving, compared to 17 percent of map readers.

Possibly to blame is the fact that one in ten drivers with navigation systems do not input a route before leaving. Furthermore, half of those drivers admit that they have actually attempted to enter a route while driving.

Nearly one in eight admit they rely solely on GPS to get to their destination without checking the route first. While the technology for the most part is accurate, occasionally there are mistakes that could put the driver in danger, such as driving the wrong way on a one-way street.

Distracted drivers and heavy reliance on navigation systems have already been parodied by the American insurance industry. Nationwide Auto Insurance ran a commercial spot in late 2005 showing a distracted driver who ends up driving through a coffee shop window because he relied too much on his GPS.

However, such an issue is no laughing matter to the insurance companies. Research shows even satellite navigation equipment, if used incorrectly, can lead to driver danger.

Have You Been a Distracted Driver?

When driving, do you ever?

- Tune the radio
- Eat, drink, or smoke

- Pick something up from the floor or between the seats
- Read, write
- Reach for the glove compartment
- Talk on the cell phone
- Clean the inside of the windshield
- Argue with another passenger
- Comb or brush your hair
- Break up fights between your kids
- Put on makeup
- Put on contact lenses or use eye drops
- Shave
- File, clip, or polish your nails?

If you answered yes to any of the above, you are driving while distracted and are at risk of an accident. Drivers inadvertently sometimes focus their attention away from the roadway, thus putting themselves and their families/passengers in jeopardy.

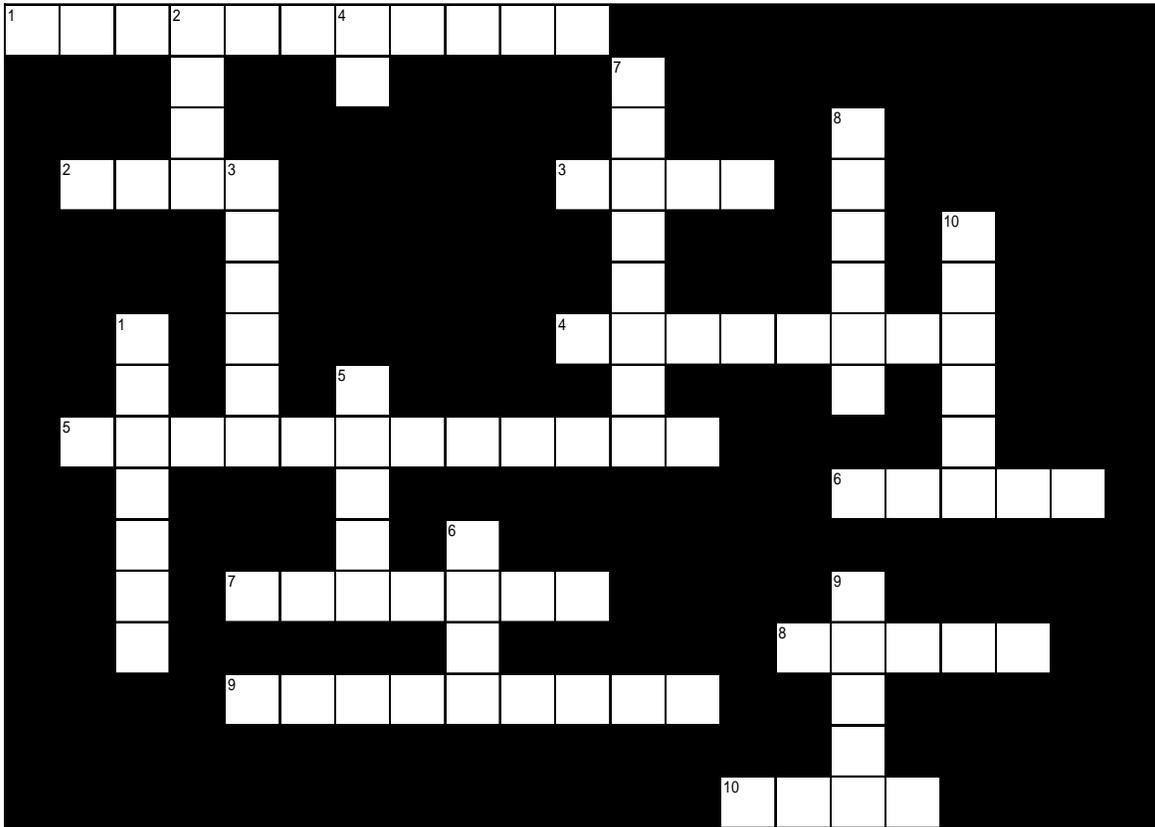
How to Avoid Being Distracted

Stay focused and pay attention!

- Limit interaction with passengers.
- Avoid talking while driving.
- Avoid taking your eyes off the road.
- Keep both hands on the wheel.
- Avoid driver fatigue.
- Don't drive when angry or upset.
- Emotions can interfere with safe driving. Wait until you have cooled down or resolved problems to drive.
- Avoid "gawking," or slowing down to look at a crash or other activity.

Distracted Driving

Crossword Puzzle



Across

- _____ to the driving task has been observed to contribute to about 78% of crashes.
- Gate or cage any _____ in the rear of your vehicle.
- Review your map and GPS only while in _____.
- The use of _____ devices is by far the most common incident causing distraction.
- Children and pets are just as capable of being serious _____.
- Driving should be your _____ priority when at the wheel.
- Adjust controls - radio, _____, seat, AC - only when stopped or before driving.
- Keep your _____ on the wheel and eyes on the road.
- There is no safe way to consume food or _____ while driving your vehicle.
- Different kinds of distractions have different levels of crash _____.

Down

- NSC believes we need to change cultural norms so people view cell phone use and text messaging while _____ as unsafe and socially unacceptable.
- According to a national survey, one in five report they send _____ messages while driving.
- Consider turning off, or putting on _____, wireless devices before starting your vehicle.
- ____ difference has been observed in interference from a hands-free or hand-held device.
- Talking to a passenger while driving is significantly _____ than talking on a cell phone.
- Drivers who use cell phones are _____ times more likely to be in a crash while using the phone.
- The slower _____ times caused by cell phone use are comparable to that of a .08 BAC.
- It is estimated that more than 100 million people use cell _____ while driving.
- Pull over and put your car in park to make or receive _____.
- Consider changing your voicemail to say you are unable to _____ calls or return messages while driving.