

The Facts About Driving While Texting

DISTRACTED DRIVING FACTS



Driver distraction is any activity that has the potential to divert a driver's attention from the primary driving tasks — vehicle control, navigation and hazard detection. Distractions can occur both within and outside the vehicle. Most research focuses on in-vehicle distractions since these are usually in the driver's control and therefore offer the most promise for safety intervention. In-vehicle distractions can be broken down into three types:



Visual

Distractions that cause the driver to look away from the road (e.g., reading a text message, glancing down to find an object or navigating a road map while driving).



Manual

Distractions that cause the driver to take a hand off the steering wheel and can result in loss of vehicle control (e.g., holding a cell phone, adjusting in-vehicle controls or reaching for an object).



Cognitive

Distractions where internal thought processes cause drivers to take their mind off the driving task (e.g., cell phone conversations involving stressful or important topics or decisions, or even thinking about routing options).

DID YOU KNOW...

Texting involves visual, manual and cognitive distractions and is therefore of particular concern.

Forty-four states, D.C., Puerto Rico, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands ban text messaging for all drivers, and 14 states, D.C., Puerto Rico, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands prohibit all drivers from using handheld cell phones while driving.¹

Engaging in visual-manual subtasks (such as reaching for a phone, dialing and texting) associated with the use of handheld phones and other portable devices increases the risk of getting into a crash by three times.⁴

Ten percent of all drivers under the age of 20 involved in fatal crashes were reported as distracted at the time of the crash, making up the largest proportion of drivers who were distracted.¹ This is consistent with a LMRIS study that showed that younger male drivers (ages 18-34 years) consistently underestimated the negative impact that distraction has on driving performance.²

For the most part, drivers do not strategically postpone tasks even when fully aware of increasing road demands, but tend to initiate a task based on the momentary demands of the road, frequently leading to driving errors.³

Five seconds is the average time your eyes are off the road while texting. When traveling at 55 mph, that's enough time to cover the length of a football field (120 yards).⁵

The NM Bureau of Mine Safety continues to bring articles and presentations to the mining community.

We believe distracted driving has reached epidemic proportions.

National Safety Council [research](#) has found that cell phones are involved in 27 percent of car crashes.

Distracted Driving Facts is from Liberty Mutual's [Winter 2015 Research to Reality](#) and is included in this newsletter. The facts page discusses why texting is particularly problematic.

The New Mexico Mine Health and Safety Conference committee is also considering presentations for the May 2, 3 and 4, 2016 conference.

¹ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Facts and Statistics. Available from <http://www.distraction.gov/content/get-the-facts/facts-and-statistics.html>. Accessed Dec. 19, 2014. ² Horrey, W.J., Lesch, M.F. and Garabet, A. "Assessing the awareness of performance decrements in distracted drivers," *Accident Analysis & Prevention*, 40(2), 675-682, 2008. ³ Horrey, W.J. "Assessing the effects of in-vehicle tasks on driving performance." *Ergonomics in Design*, 19(4), 4-7, 2008. ⁴ 100-Car Naturalistic Driving Study, Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, 2006, www.vtti.vt.edu. ⁵ Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, 2009, www.vtti.vt.edu.