

## ENGAGE

# know the facts about distracted driving

The research, statistics and trends are too much to ignore. Distracted driving, particularly the use of mobile devices while driving, poses a serious threat to the safety of everyone on the road. Consider these facts and you'll see why that call, text or Tweet can wait until you are safely parked.

## TEN FACTS ABOUT THE DANGERS OF DISTRACTED DRIVING

1. In 2012, 3,328 people were killed and an estimated 421,000 injured in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers. Additionally, 540 pedestrians were killed in distraction-related crashes.<sup>1</sup>
2. Crashes involving a distracted driver accounted for 17% of the total traffic-related economic loss and cost the nation \$46 billion in 2010, an average cost of \$148 for every person in the U.S. Including lost quality of life, distracted driving crashes were responsible for \$129 billion or 15% of the overall societal harm caused by motor vehicle crashes.<sup>2</sup>
3. Although many things contribute to distracted driving, the use of cell phones occurs with such frequency and duration that it is more likely to lead to a crash or near-crash than other forms of distraction.
4. Estimates indicate that drivers using cell phones look but fail to see up to 50% of the information in their driving environment.<sup>3</sup>
5. A recent observational study concluded that at any given time an estimated 9% of drivers (or 1.2 million) are visibly speaking into either a handheld or hands-free mobile device.<sup>4</sup>
6. The combined results of more than 50 studies reported significant delays in drivers' reaction time when using a cell phone while driving.<sup>5,6</sup>
7. Whether a conversation takes place on a handheld or a hands-free device, research has shown that the cognitive distraction is similar. Cognitive distractions can lead to "inattention blindness" in which drivers fail to process information from objects in the roadway even when they are looking at them.<sup>7</sup>
8. In a 2013 national survey, about one-quarter of drivers of all ages reported sending a text message or email while driving at least once in the past 30 days, and nearly three-quarters said they had read a text message or email.<sup>8</sup>
9. Sending a text message takes a driver's eyes off the road for an average of five seconds. That's similar to driving the length of a football field at 55 mph (88 km) with your eyes closed.
10. Texting and driving are illegal for all drivers in 44 of the 50 U.S. states, D.C., Puerto Rico, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Some states and municipalities ban the use of handheld phones as well.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup>NHTSA's Traffic Safety Facts Research Note, Distracted Driving 2012, Apr 2014

<sup>2</sup>NHTSA, The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes 2010 (Released May 2014)

<sup>3</sup>Strayer, D. L. (2007, Feb. 28) Presentation at Cell Phone and Driver Distraction, Traffic Safety Coalition, Washington Dc.

<sup>4</sup>Distraction.gov (NOPUS)

<sup>5</sup>Caird, J.K.; Willness, C.R.; Steel, P.; and Scialfa, C. 2008. A meta-analysis of the effects of cell phones on driver performance. *Accident Analysis and Prevention* 40(4):1282-93.

<sup>6</sup>Horrey, W.J. and Wickens, C.D. 2006. Examining the impact of cell phone conversations on driving using meta-analytic techniques. *Human Factors* 48(1):196-205.

<sup>7</sup>Strayer, D.L.; Drews, F.A.; and Johnston, W.A. 2003. Cell phone-induced failures of visual attention during simulated driving. *Journal of Experimental Psychology Applied* 9(1):23-32.

<sup>8</sup>2013 traffic safety culture index. Washington, DC: AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety.

<sup>9</sup>Governors Highway Safety Association, July 2014

## EXTEND

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TIPS FOR **TAKING ACTION AGAINST DISTRACTION**

- **Safe driving is serious business.** Do not use your commute time (or any time) to participate on conference calls while driving—even if just listening in. Always pull over to a safe location to take or make calls and check messages.
- **Turn your mobile device off when driving.** Avoid the temptation to talk or text on your phone; simply turn off and stow your device before you begin driving.
- **Use technology to manage your technology.** If you're having trouble breaking the habit of using your mobile device while driving, consider using a call and text blocking app to let others know you are driving and to queue calls and texts until you are safely pulled over. Be sure to check with your insurance company because they may offer a policy discount.
- **Help others help themselves.** Make it a practice when you call someone's cell phone to ask if he or she is driving. If the response is "yes," take it upon yourself to call back later or ask that your call be returned when he or she has reached their destination.
- **Speak up and teach your kids to do so as well.** If you are a passenger and the driver is not focusing on the road, don't be afraid to speak up! Offer to help with directions or even make a call or send a text on his or her behalf. You'll be looking out for your own safety, as well as that of the driver, the other passengers and those sharing the road with you.
- **Be a role model.** Take a minute to change the greeting on your cell phone to say something like, *"I can't take your call right now. I'm either away from my phone or driving. Your call is important to me and I will get back with you as soon as I am able to do so safely."* You never know how many people may be inspired by your message to think about the risks of using a mobile device while driving and perhaps change their messages as well.
- **Got kids? Enlist their help.** Kids can be great enforcers. If they know your rule is "no phone use while driving," they'll remind you to hang it up if you slip up. And remember that they will do what you do. Even if your kids are far from the age of becoming a driver, demonstrate now the behavior you'll expect from them. Set the right example concerning the use of mobile devices while driving and always be mindful of your precious cargo.