

DISTRACTED DRIVING

IN THE UNITED STATES



2,841

people were killed in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers in 2018.¹

Distracted driving is any activity that takes the driver's attention away from driving. Distracted driving includes cell phone use and other activities such as eating, talking to other passengers, or adjusting radio or climate controls.

The 3 Main Types of Distracted Driving



Taking your eyes off the road



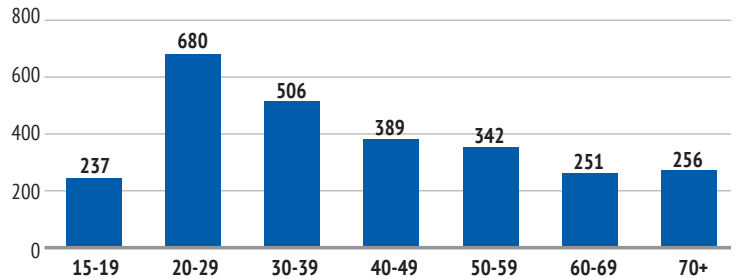
Taking your hands off the wheel



Taking your mind off driving

Number of Distracted Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes

By Age Group, 2018



Source: Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), 2018.

Get the Facts

Many states have taken steps to help prevent distracted driving. Examples include:

- banning texting while driving
- banning hand-held cell phone use while driving
- requiring passenger limits for young drivers
- using high-visibility enforcement of these laws

However, research on the effectiveness of cell phone and texting laws is mixed.



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Injury Prevention and Control

Working together, we can help keep people safe on the road—every day.

Promising Strategies to Help Address Distracted Driving

High-Visibility Enforcement: Cell Phone Use and Texting

High-visibility enforcement (HVE) efforts aim to prevent cell phone use while driving by increasing the perceived risk of getting a ticket. HVE combines increased enforcement, such as saturation patrols (increased number of officers patrolling a specific area), with paid and earned media.



Impact

HVE can reduce cell phone use while driving. Pilot HVE programs in Syracuse, New York, and Hartford, Connecticut, used increased enforcement efforts with paid media, press events, and news releases over a one-year period. Syracuse saw a 32% decrease in hand-held cell phone use among drivers, while Hartford saw a 57% decrease.



By the Numbers

As of 2017, the use of HVE is limited to a few states.³



Learn More

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety keeps track of distracted driving laws.

You can learn more here:

www.iihs.org/topics/distracted-driving

Graduated Driver Licensing: Young Passenger Restriction

Graduated driver licensing (GDL) is a system that helps new drivers gain experience under low-risk conditions by granting driving privileges in stages. Comprehensive GDL systems include five components,⁴ one of which addresses distracted driving: young passenger restriction.



Impact

Limiting the number of young passengers can help reduce distracted driving among teen drivers.³ A national study of 15-17 year old drivers showed that fatal crashes were 21% lower when zero passengers were allowed and 7% lower when one passenger was allowed, compared with policies that allowed two or more passengers.⁵



By the Numbers

For drivers with intermediate or provisional licenses:

- 16 states and Washington, D.C., have a limit of zero young passengers without adult supervision.⁶
- 28 states have a limit of one young passenger without adult supervision.⁶

REFERENCES

1. National Center for Statistics and Analysis. (2020, March). Teen distracted driver data. (Report No. DOT HS 812 931). Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Retrieved from <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812931>.
2. Chaudhary, N. K., Casanova-Powell, T. D., Cosgrove, L., Reagan, I., & Williams, A. (2012, August). Evaluation of NHTSA distracted driving demonstration projects in Connecticut and New York. (Report No. DOT HS 811 635). Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Retrieved from <https://www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/nti/pdf/811635.pdf>.
3. Richard, C. M., Magee, K., Bacon-Abdelmoteleb, P., & Brown, J. L. (2018, April). Countermeasures that work: A highway safety countermeasure guide for State Highway Safety Offices, Ninth edition (Report No. DOT HS 812 478). https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.dot.gov/files/documents/812478_countermeasures-that-work-a-highway-safety-countermeasures-guide.pdf. Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Motor Vehicle Injuries. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/psr/NationalSummary/NSMVI.aspx>.
5. McCart, A. T., Teoh, E. R., Fields, M., Braitman, K. A., & Hellinga, L. A. Graduated licensing laws and fatal crashes of teenage drivers: a national study. *Traffic Injury Prevention*. 2010;3:240-248. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/15389580903578854>.
6. IIHS. (2020, May). Graduated licensing laws by state. Retrieved from <https://www.iihs.org/topics/teenagers/graduated-licensing-laws-table?topicName=teenagers>.

For more information about distracted driving, visit www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/distracted_driving.