

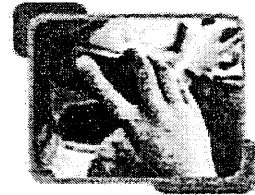
### Trends in Use of Wireless Communication Devices:

1. There are 300 million in the United States today. How many of them have cell phones?
  - a. 25 million
  - b. 50 million
  - c. 75 million
  - d. 100 million
2. Use of a cell phone increases your chances of being involved in an accident by:
  - a. 100%
  - b. 200%
  - c. 400%
  - d. 800%
3. Use of hands-free devices is proving to be safer than use of hand-held cell phones.
  - a. True
  - b. False
4. Texting while driving increases your chances of being involved in an accident by:
  - a. 100%
  - b. 200%
  - c. 1000%
  - d. 2000%
5. Every state in the country has some law restricting the use of cell phones while driving.
  - a. True
  - b. False
6. It is illegal in Texas to text while driving in a government vehicle.
  - a. True
  - b. False
7. How many teens admit to texting while driving?
  - a. 10%
  - b. 20%
  - c. 50%
  - d. 75%
8. Studies show that reaction time for someone texting while driving is equivalent to someone who has consumed:
  - a. Two beers
  - b. Two margaritas with a floater
  - c. Three to four alcoholic drinks
  - d. A double-expresso latte lite

# Cell Phone and Texting Laws

May 2011

This chart outlines all state cell phone and text messaging laws. Some local jurisdictions may have additional regulations. Enforcement type is shown in parenthesis.



- **Handheld Cell Phones:** 8 states (Calif., Conn., Del., Md., N.J., N.Y., Ore. and Wash.), D.C. and the Virgin Islands prohibit all drivers from using handheld cell phones while driving. Except for Maryland, all laws are **primary enforcement**—an officer may cite a driver for using a handheld cell phone without any other traffic offense taking place.
- **All Cell Phone Use:** No state bans all cell phone use (handheld and hands-free) for all drivers, but many prohibit all cell phone use by certain drivers:
  - **Novice Drivers:** 30 states and D.C. ban all cell phone use by novice drivers.
  - **School Bus Drivers:** Bus drivers in 19 states and D.C. may not use a cell phone when passengers are present.
- **Text Messaging:** 31 states, D.C. and Guam ban text messaging for all drivers. 27 states, D.C., and Guam have primary enforcement; the others, secondary.
  - **Novice Drivers:** An additional 9 states prohibit text messaging by novice drivers.
  - **School Bus Drivers:** 3 states restrict school bus drivers from texting while driving.
- Some states such as Maine, N.H. and Utah treat cell phone use and texting as part of a larger distracted driving issue. In Utah, cellphone use is an offense *only* if a driver is also committing some other moving violation (other than speeding).

**Crash Data Collection:** Many states include a category for cell phone/electronic equipment distraction on police accident report forms. Recently proposed federal legislation would require states to collect this data in order to qualify for certain federal funding.

**Preemption Laws:** Many localities have passed their own distracted driving bans. However, some states — such as Fla., Ky., La., Miss., Nev., and Okla. — prohibit localities from enacting such laws.

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[Public Awareness Campaigns](#)


[10 Tips to Avoid Distractions](#)

[Survey of the States Published 2010](#)

[Oprah's No Phone Zone](#)

**Letters Supporting Federal Role**  
(October 21, 2009)

[House](#)  (46 KB, 3 pgs.)

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State	Handheld Ban	All Cell Phone Ban		Text Messaging Ban			Crash Data
		School Bus Drivers	Novice Drivers	All Drivers	School Bus Drivers	Novice Drivers	
<a href="#">Alabama</a>			16, or 17 w/ Intermediate License <6 months (Primary)			16, or 17 w/ Intermediate License <6 months (Primary)	
<a href="#">Alaska</a>				Yes (Primary)	Covered under all driver ban		Yes
<a href="#">Arizona</a>		Yes (Primary)					
<a href="#">Arkansas</a> <sup>1</sup>	18 - 20 years old (Primary)	Yes (Primary)	<18 (Secondary)	Yes (Primary)	Covered under all driver ban		Yes
<a href="#">California</a>	Yes (Primary)	Yes (Primary)	<18 (Secondary)	Yes (Primary)	Covered under all driver ban		Yes
<a href="#">Colorado</a>			<18 (Primary)	Yes (Primary)	Covered under all driver ban		Yes
<a href="#">Connecticut</a>	Yes (Primary)	Yes (Primary)	<18 (Primary)	Yes (Primary)	Covered under all driver ban		
<a href="#">Delaware</a>	Yes (Primary)	Yes (Primary)	Learner or Intermediate License (Primary)	Yes (Primary)	Covered under all driver ban		Yes
<a href="#">D.C.</a>	Yes (Primary)	Yes (Primary)	Learners Permit (Primary)	Yes (Primary)	Covered under all driver ban		Yes
<a href="#">Florida</a>							
<a href="#">Georgia</a>		Yes (Primary)	<18 (Primary)	Yes (Primary)	Covered under all driver ban		Yes

Guam				Yes (Primary)	Covered under all driver ban	
Hawaii <sup>2</sup>	See footnote					
Idaho <sup>3</sup>						See footnote
Illinois <sup>4</sup>	See footnote	Yes (Primary)	<19 (Primary)	Yes (Primary)	Covered under all driver ban	Yes
Indiana			<18 (Primary)		<18 (Primary)	Yes
Iowa			Restricted or Intermediate License (Primary)	Yes (Secondary)	Covered under all driver ban	Yes
Kansas			Learner or Intermediate License (Primary)	Yes (Primary)	Covered under all driver ban	Yes
Kentucky		Yes (Primary)	<18 (Primary)	Yes (Primary)	Covered under all driver ban	
Louisiana	Learner or Intermediate License (regardless of age)	Yes (Primary)	1st year of License (Primary for <18)	Yes (Primary)	Covered under all driver ban	Yes
Maine <sup>5</sup>			<18 (Primary)		<18 (Primary)	Yes
Maryland	Yes (Secondary)		<18 w/ Learner or Provisional License (Secondary)	Yes (Primary)	Covered under all driver ban	Yes
Massachusetts		Yes (Primary)	<18 (Primary)	Yes (Primary)	Covered under all driver ban	Yes
Michigan <sup>6</sup>			See footnote	Yes (Primary)	Covered under all driver ban	Yes
Minnesota		Yes (Primary)	<18 w/ Learner or Provisional License (Primary)	Yes (Primary)	Covered under all driver ban	Yes
Mississippi		Yes (Primary) (eff. 7/1/11)			Yes (Primary) (eff. 7/1/11) Learner or Provisional License (Primary)	
Missouri					<21 (Primary)	
Montana						Yes
Nebraska			<18 w/ Learner or Intermediate License (Secondary)	Yes (Secondary)	Covered under all driver ban	Yes
Nevada						Yes
New Hampshire <sup>7</sup>				Yes (Primary)	Covered under all driver ban	
New Jersey	Yes (Primary)	Yes (Primary)	Permit or Provisional License (Primary)	Yes (Primary)	Covered under all driver ban	Yes
New Mexico	In State vehicles		Learner or Provisional License (Primary) (eff. 6/17/11)		Learner or Provisional License (Primary) (eff. 6/17/11)	Yes
New York	Yes (Primary)			Yes (Secondary)	Covered under all driver ban	Yes
North Carolina		Yes (Primary)	<18 (Primary)	Yes (Primary)	Covered under all driver ban	

North Dakota			<18 (Primary) (eff. 1/1/12)	Yes (Primary) (eff. 8/1/11)	Covered under all driver ban	Yes	
Ohio							
Oklahoma	Learner or Intermediate License (Primary)	Yes (Primary)			Yes (Primary)	Learner or Intermediate License (Primary)	
Oregon	Yes (Primary)		<18 (Primary)	Yes (Primary)	Covered under all driver ban	Yes	
Pennsylvania						Yes	
Rhode Island		Yes (Primary)	<18 (Primary)	Yes (Primary)	Covered under all driver ban	Yes	
South Carolina <sup>8</sup>						See footnote	
South Dakota						Yes	
Tennessee		Yes (Primary)	Learner or Intermediate License (Primary)	Yes (Primary)	Covered under all driver ban	Yes	
Texas <sup>9</sup>		Yes, w/ passenger ≤17 (Primary)	Intermediate License, 1st 12 mos. (Primary)		Yes, w/ passenger ≤17 (Primary)	Intermediate License, 1st 12 mos. (Primary)	
Utah <sup>10</sup>	See footnote			Yes (Primary)	Covered under all driver ban	Yes	
Vermont			<18 (Primary)	Yes (Primary)	Covered under all driver ban		
Virgin Islands	Yes					Yes	
Virginia		Yes (Primary)	<18 (Secondary)	Yes (Secondary)	Covered under all driver ban (Primary)	Covered under all driver ban	
Washington	Yes (Primary)		Learner or Intermediate License (Primary)	Yes (Primary)	Covered under all driver ban	Yes	
West Virginia			<18 w/ Learner or Intermediate License (Primary)			<18 w/ Learner or Intermediate License (Primary)	
Wisconsin				Yes (Primary)	Covered under all driver ban		
Wyoming				Yes (Primary)	Covered under all driver ban	Yes	
<b>Total States</b>	<b>8 + D.C., Virgin Islands</b> Primary (7) Secondary (1)	<b>19 + D.C.</b> All Primary	<b>30 + D.C.</b> Primary (25 + D.C.) Secondary (5)	<b>31 + D.C., Guam</b> Primary (27 + D.C., Guam) Secondary (4)	<b>3</b> All Primary	<b>9</b> All Primary	<b>34 + D.C., Virgin Islands</b>

<sup>1</sup> Effective 10/1/2011, Arkansas also bans the use of handheld cell phones while driving in a school zone or in a highway construction zone. This law is secondarily enforced.

<sup>2</sup> Hawaii does not have a state law banning the use of handheld cell phones. However, all of the state's counties have enacted distracted driving ordinances.

<sup>3</sup> Idaho has a "Distraction in/on Vehicle (List)" attribute as part of its Contributing Circumstances element, and officers are supposed to list the distractions in the narrative.

<sup>4</sup> Illinois bans the use of handheld cell phones while driving in a school zone or in a highway construction zone.

<sup>5</sup> Maine has passed a law making it against the law to drive while distracted in the state.

<sup>6</sup> In Michigan, teens with probationary licenses whose cell phone usage contributes to a traffic crash or ticket may not use a cell phone while driving.

<sup>7</sup> Dealt with as a distracted driving issue; New Hampshire enacted a comprehensive distracted driving law.

<sup>8</sup> South Carolina has a Distracted/inattention attribute under Contributing Factors.

<sup>9</sup> Texas has banned the use of hand-held phones and texting in school zones.

<sup>10</sup> Utah's law defines careless driving as committing a moving violation (other than speeding) while distracted by use of a handheld cellphone or other activities not related to driving.

Sources: Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) and State Highway Safety Offices.

Disclaimer: The information on this page is for general information purposes only and is not to be considered legal authority. For clarification on any law, consult the appropriate State Highway Safety Office.

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## Texting While Driving: How Dangerous is it? - The Results

Unprotected text: We investigate if sending messages on your phone while driving is more LOL than OMFG.

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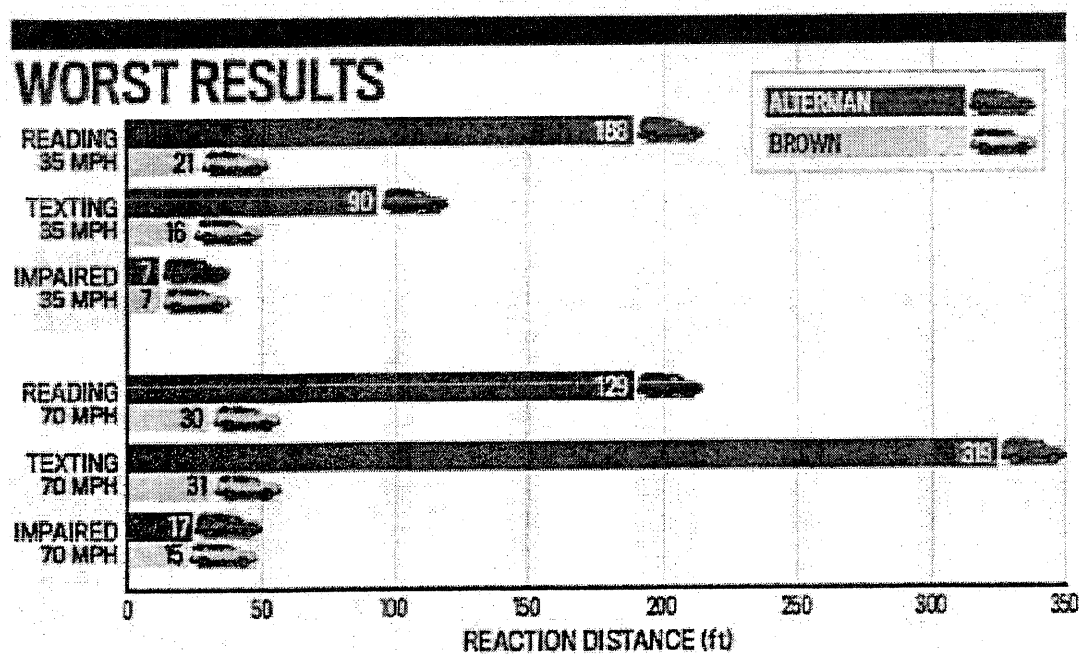
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The prognosis doesn't improve when you look at the limitations of our test. We were using a straight road without any traffic, road signals, or pedestrians, and we were only looking at reaction times. Even though our young driver fared better than the balding Alterman, Brown's method of holding the phone up above the dashboard and typing with one hand would make it difficult to do anything except hit the brakes. And if anything in the periphery required a response, well, both drivers would probably be screwed.

Also, don't take the intoxicated results to be acceptable just because they're an improvement over the texting numbers. They only look better because the texting results are so horrendously bad. The buzzed Jordan had to be told *twice* which lane to drive in, and in the real world, that mistake could mean a head-on crash. And we remind again that we only measured response to a light—the reduction in motor skills and cognitive power associated with impaired driving weren't really exposed here.

Both socially and legally, drunk driving is completely unacceptable. Texting, on the other hand, is still in its formative period with respect to laws and opinion. A few jurisdictions have passed ordinances against texting while driving. But even if sweeping legislation were passed to outlaw any typing behind the wheel, it would still be difficult to enforce the law.



In our test, neither subject had any idea that using his phone would slow down his reaction time so much. Like most folks, they think they're pretty good drivers. Our results prove otherwise, at both city and highway speeds. The key element to driving safely is keeping your eyes and your mind on the road. Text messaging distracts any driver from that primary task. So the next time you're tempted to text, tweet, e-mail, or otherwise type while driving, either ignore the urge or pull over we don't want you rear ending us.