



Driving on the Right Side of the Road Cell Phones & Texting



JUST THE FACTS

Overview

- In 2010, 3092 people were killed in crashes involving a distracted driver and an estimated additional 416,000 were injured.¹
- It is estimated that there are over 1 million crashes involving drivers using cell phones and texting (one every 24 seconds) in the U.S. each year.²
- In the month of June 2011, more than 196 billion text messages were sent or received in the U.S., up nearly 50% from June 2009.³
- 75% of all American teens ages 12-17 own a cell phone; 66% use their phones to send or receive text messages.⁴
- 82% of teens ages 16-17 have a cell phone; 76% use their cell to text.⁵

Dangers of Using Cell Phones While Driving

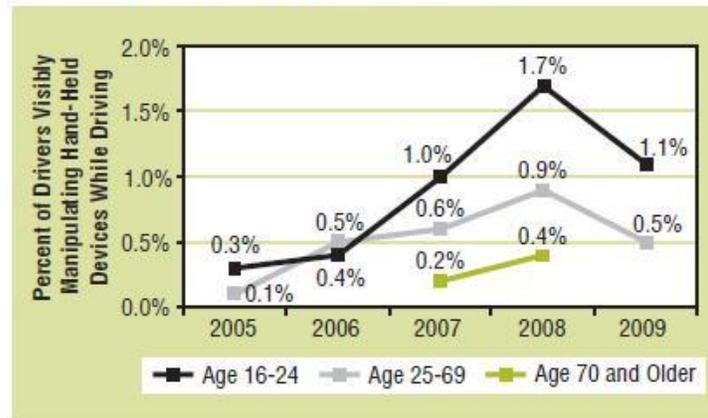
- At any given moment during daylight hours in 2009, the hand-held cell phone use rate translated into 672,000 vehicles being driven by someone using a hand-held cell phone.⁶
- Over half (52%) of cell-owning teens ages 16-17 say they've talked on a cell phone while driving.⁷
- Drivers who use hand-held devices are four times as likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves.⁸
- The use of cell phones while driving increases the chance of getting into a crash by 400%.⁹
- 40% of all teens ages 12-17 say they have been in a car when the driver used a cell phone in a way that put themselves or others in danger.¹⁰
- A 2001 University of Utah study showed that hands-free cell phones are just as distracting as handheld cell phones.¹¹
- A 2003 University of Utah study showed that the reason is "inattention blindness," in which motorists look directly at road conditions but don't really see them because they are distracted by a cell phone conversation. And such drivers aren't aware they are impaired.¹²
- A 2005 University of Utah study suggested that when teenagers and young adults talk on cell phones while driving, their reaction times are as slow as those of elderly drivers.¹³
- Using a cell phone while driving, whether hand-held or hands-free, delays a driver's reactions as much as having a blood alcohol concentration at the legal limit of .08 percent.¹⁴
- Some research findings show talking on a cell phone and having a conversation with a passenger while driving to be equally risky, while others show cell phone use to be more risky. A significant difference between the two is the fact that a passenger can monitor the driving situation along with the driver and pause for, or alert the driver to, potential hazards, whereas a person on the other end of the phone line is unaware of the roadway situation.¹⁵
- Available research indicates that the cognitive distraction from using a hands-free or hand-held device is significant enough to degrade a driver's performance because a driver is more likely to miss key visual and audio cues needed to avoid a crash.¹⁶

Dangers of Texting While Driving:

- While all distractions can endanger drivers' safety, texting is the most alarming because it involves taking one's eyes off the road, hands off the wheel, and mind off the primary task of driving.¹⁷
- Drivers who text while driving display slower reaction times, have difficulty staying in their lane, and are less likely to see relevant objects, visual cues, or exits, red lights, and stop signs.¹⁸
- One in three (34%) teens ages 16-17 say they have texted while driving.¹⁹
- 48% of all teens ages 12-17 say that they have been in a car when the driver was texting.²⁰

- Since 2007, the percentage of drivers visibly manipulating hand-held devices has been significantly higher among drivers ages 16 to 24 than that of other age groups.²¹

Percentage of Drivers Visibly Manipulating Hand-Held Devices While Driving by Age, 2005–2009



IT'S THE LAW

Nationally:

- 39 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the Virgin Islands ban text messaging for all drivers (Twelve of these laws were enacted in 2010 alone).²²

Texas:

- Texas has enacted a ban on all cell phone (handheld and hands-free) and texting for bus drivers and drivers under 18 years of age.²³
 - In Texas, bus driver laws pertain to bus drivers with passengers age 17 and under.
 - In Texas, persons under 18 years of age may not operate a motor vehicle while using a wireless communications device, except in case of emergency.
- Texas has also banned the use of hand-held phones and texting in school zones²⁴
 - An officer can ticket the driver for the offense without any other traffic offense taking place.²⁵

(Adapted from [Texas Cell Phone Laws](#)²⁶ and [Governors Highway Safety Association, Key Highway Safety Laws](#))²⁷

KEEP IT SAFE

When you are driving:

- Do not talk on your cell phone or text.
- If you must make or take a call, pull over to a safe place and then do it.
- Be wary of cars around you that may have a driver using a cell phone. You should use extra caution when driving around them and, if possible, stay a good distance away from them.
- If you are a passenger and the driver is using a cell phone, encourage them to stop – for your safety.

(Adapted from [Nationwide, Driving Safety Tips](#),²⁸ [SmartMotorist.com](#)²⁹)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [Faces of Distracted Driving](#)³⁰
- [Official US Government Website for Distracted Driving](#)³¹
- [University of Utah's studies on distracted driving](#)³²

¹ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *D!STRACTION.GOV, What Is Distracted Driving*, Retrieved on October 26, 2012 from <http://www.distraction.gov/content/get-the-facts/facts-and-statistics.html>.

² National Safety Council, *Distracted Driving Research and Statistics*, Retrieved on September 1, 2011 from http://www.nsc.org/safety_road/Distracted_Driving/Pages/DistractedDrivingResearchandStatistics.aspx#cell

³ CTIA The Wireless Association, *Wireless Quick Facts*, Retrieved on October 26, 2012 from <http://www.ctia.org/advocacy/research/index.cfm/aid/10323>

⁴ Pew Internet & American Life Project, *Teens and Distracted Driving*, November 16, 2009, Retrieved on October 26, 2012 from <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2009/Teens-and-Distracted-Driving/Overview.aspx> (hereinafter referred to as *Teens and Distracted Driving*).

⁵ See *Teens and Distracted Driving* - endnote 4

⁶ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *Traffic Safety Facts - Research Note - Driver Electronic Use in 2009*, DOT HS 811 372 at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811372.pdf> (hereinafter referred to as *Driver Electronic Use in 2009*)

⁷ See *Teens and Distracted Driving* - endnote 4

⁸ Hosking, Simon, Young, Kristie & Regan, Michael, Monash University Accident Research Centre, *The Effects of Text Messaging on Young Novice Driver Performance* (February 2006), Retrieved on October 26, 2012 from <http://www.distraction.gov/research/PDF-Files/Effects-of-Text-Messaging.pdf>.

⁹ Redelmeier, D. A., & Tibshirani, R. J. (1997) *Association between cellular-telephone calls and motor vehicle collisions*. The New England Journal of Medicine, 336, 453-45

¹⁰ See *Teens and Distracted Driving* - endnote 4

¹¹ U News Center, The University of Utah, *Drivers On Cell Phones Are As Bad As Drunks* (June 29, 2006), Retrieved on September 1, 2011 from <http://www.unews.utah.edu/old/p/062206-1.html> (hereinafter referred to as *Drivers On Cell Phones*)

¹² See *Drivers On Cell Phones* - endnote 11

¹³ See *Drivers On Cell Phones* - endnote 11

¹⁴ See *Drivers on Cell Phones* – endnote 11

¹⁵ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *D!STRACTION.GOV, Policy Statement and Compiled FAQs on Distracted Driving*, Retrieved on October 26, 2012, from

<http://www.nhtsa.gov/Driving+Safety/Distracted+Driving/Policy+Statement+and+Compiled+FAQs+on+Distracted+Driving> (hereinafter referred to as *FAQs*).

¹⁶ See *FAQs* - endnote 15

¹⁷ See *FAQs* - endnote 15

¹⁸ Focus Driven, *Advocates for Cell-Free Driving, Get The Facts – Texting*, Retrieved on September 1, 2011 from www.focusdriven.org/texting

¹⁹ See *Teens and Distracted Driving* - endnote 4

²⁰ See *Teens and Distracted Driving* - endnote 4

²¹ See *Driver Electronic Use in 2009* - endnote 6

²² Governors Highway Safety Association, *Cell Phone and Texting Laws*, Retrieved on October 30, 2012 from http://www.ghsa.org/html/stateinfo/laws/cellphone_laws.html (hereinafter referred to as *Cell Phone and Texting Laws*)

²³ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *D!STRACTION.GOV/ State Laws*, Retrieved on October 25, 2012 from <http://www.distraction.gov/content/get-the-facts/state-laws.html> (click on Texas) (hereinafter referred to as *D!STRACTION.GOV/ State Laws*).

²⁴ See *D!STRACTION.GOV/ State Laws* - endnote 23

²⁵ See *D!STRACTION.GOV/ State Laws* - endnote 23

²⁶ *Driving Laws.org, Texas Cell Phone Laws*, Retrieved on September 1, 2011 from <http://www.drivinglaws.org/texas.php>

²⁷ See *Cell Phone and Texting Laws* – endnote 22

²⁸ Nationwide Insurance, *Driving Safety Tips*, Retrieved on September 1, 2011 from <http://www.nationwide.com/newsroom/dwd-safety-tips.jsp>

²⁹ SmartMotorist.com, *Distracted Drivers Cause Motor Vehicle Accidents*, Retrieved on September 1, 2011 from <http://www.smartmotorist.com/traffic-and-safety-guideline/distracted-drivers-cause-motor-vehicle-accidents.html>

³⁰ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *D!STRACTION.GOV, Faces of Distracted Driving*, Retrieved on October 26, 2012 from <http://www.distraction.gov/content/faces/index.html>.

³¹ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *D!STRACTION.GOV*, Retrieved on September 1, 2011 from <http://www.distraction.gov/>

³² See *Drivers On Cell Phones* - endnote 11