



Test Your Knowledge

Q: Does every state have laws against texting and driving?

A: Currently, 48 states, the District of Columbia, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands ban texting while driving for all drivers.¹ Laws on cell phone use and texting by state can be found at <https://www.iihs.org/topics/distracted-driving/cellphone-use-laws>

Q: What are the consequences of texting while driving?

A: Aside from potentially injuring or killing yourself or someone else, you can pay a fine of up to \$10,000 in states where there are laws banning texting while driving. In more serious cases, texting while operating a motor vehicle can result in criminal charges or jail time. Your insurance rate can be increased if cited for texting while driving and you may be held liable for property damages, medical bills, lost wages and more.

Texting and driving is the most alarming form of distracted driving, as it requires visual, manual and cognitive attention from the driver. Texting and driving puts everyone on the road at risk.² Know the facts and make a commitment to never text, or even read a text, while behind the wheel — even when stopped in traffic!

KNOW THE FACTS

- Driving performance is decreased while texting, as there is a significant increase in time spent with eyes off the road and hands off the wheel.³
- According to a 2018 study, engaging in visual-manual tasks such as reaching for a phone, dialing and texting increase the risk of getting into a crash by three times.⁴
- In a 30-day study, 61% of U.S. drivers ages 18-64 reported that they had talked on their cell phone while driving, and 45% reported that they had read or sent text messages or email messages while driving.⁵
- At any moment during daytime hours in the United States, approximately 668,000 drivers are using cell phones or manipulating electronic devices while operating a motor vehicle.⁶
- Sending or receiving a text takes a driver's eyes from the road for an average of 4.6 seconds. At 55 mph, this amount of time is equivalent to driving the length of an entire football field blind.⁷
- It is estimated that 14% of all fatal motor vehicle crashes involve cell phone use, but this figure is likely to be underreported due to driver reluctance to admit behavior and lack of a witness.⁸

WHAT ACTIONS MOST OFTEN LEAD TO A CRASH?

- Cell phone tasks that draw the driver's eyes away from the road are those with the highest risk.³ This includes basically all texting tasks, though finding and entering an address require more attention.

WHO IS MOST LIKELY TO TEXT AND DRIVE?

- The problem is especially pronounced among teen drivers; drivers 16-20 years of age have the highest incidence of self-reported crash or near-crash experiences compared to all other age groups, and the highest incidence of phone involvement at the time of these experiences.⁹
- 40% of drivers aged 16-20 years old answer calls while driving, 33% of drivers in this age group make calls while driving.⁹
- Young drivers are less likely to say something to a driver who is using a cell phone than older drivers.¹⁰
- For drivers age 15-19 involved in a fatal crash, 16% of the distracted drivers were distracted by the use of cell phones.⁸
- Approximately 14% of drivers aged 16-20 send text messages while driving, 18% read them while driving.⁹

Think**First** about...

Texting and Driving *Fast Facts!*

... protecting yourself and others from serious injury or death! Driving a car is an activity that requires your utmost attention; even the best drivers can be perpetrators or victims of distracted driving. Do your part and Think First before texting and driving!

Test Your Knowledge

Q: Is it alright to text while stopped at a traffic light?

A: No. While state laws vary, most laws prohibit texting while driving in traffic, which includes anytime you are in a traffic lane. Don't base all you do on texting laws, or the lack of them; consider the facts. Traffic intersections are the site of many crashes and require the full attention of every driver, bicycle rider and pedestrian. Don't text in traffic!

PREVENTION TIPS

If you are a driver:

- Put your phone away every time you drive; consider switching to silent mode to avoid the temptation to check calls.
- Don't ever text, surf the web or read messages while driving; focus on driving!
- If you need to check or use your phone, wait for a safe place to pull off the road.

If you are a passenger:

- Don't let your driver be distracted: offer to take the phone for them and refuse to ride with anyone who is not driving safely.
- Never distract a driver with text.

If you are a parent:

- You play a key role in helping your teen develop safe driving habits, so talk often about the dangers of texting and driving.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Take the ThinkFirst Drive Safe Pledge at www.thinkfirst.org to:
 1. Protect lives by never texting or talking on a phone while driving.
 2. Be a good passenger and speak out if the driver in your car is distracted.
 3. Encourage friends and family to drive phone-free.
- Be proactive! Plan school/community prevention programs that explain the consequences of traffic crash -related injuries and the importance of saying no to texting and driving.

Sources:

¹Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS)/Highway Loss Data Institute (HLDI). Cellphone Use Laws by State. Available from URL: <https://www.iihs.org/topics/distracted-driving/cellphone-use-laws> (accessed 4/2/2020).

²Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS)/Highway Loss Data Institute (HLDI). (2020, Feb). Available from URL: <https://www.iihs.org/topics/distracted-driving> (accessed 4/2/2020).

³National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Dept. of Transportation (US). Distraction Effects of In -Vehicle Tasks Requiring Number and Text Entry Using Auto Alliance's Principle 2.1B Verification Procedure. Washington (DC): NHTSA; 2012 [cited January 4, 2014]. Available from: URL: http://www.distraction.gov/download/research_pdf/Distraction_Effects_of_In-Vehicle_Tasks_508.pdf.

⁴Owens, J.M., Dingus, T.A., Guo, F., Fang, Y., Perez, M. & McClafferty, J. (2018). Crash Risk of Cell Phone Use While Driving: A Case – Crossover Analysis of Naturalistic Driving Data. AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. Available from URL: https://aaafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/CellPhoneCrashRisk_FINAL.pdf (accessed 4/2/2020).

⁵AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety (2018). 2017 Traffic Safety Culture Index. AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. Available from URL: <https://aaafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/TSCI-2017-Report.pdf> (accessed 4/2/2020).

⁶National Center for Statistics and Analysis. (2019, January). Driver electronic device use in 2017 (Traffic Safety Facts Research Note. Report No. DOT HS 812 665). Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Available from URL: <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812665> (accessed 4/2/2020)

⁷National Highway Traffic Administration (NHTSA). Distracted Driving. Available from URL: <https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/distracted-driving> (accessed 4/2/2020)

⁸National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Dept. of Transportation (US). (2019, April). Traffic Safety Facts Research Notes: Distracted Driving in Fatal Crashes, 2017. DOT HS 812 700. Available from URL: <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812700> (accessed 4/2/2020).

⁹Schroeder, P., Wilbur, M., & Peña, R. (2018, March). National survey on distracted driving attitudes and behaviors - 2015 (Report No. DOT HS 812 461). Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Available from URL: https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.dot.gov/files/documents/13123-2015_natl_survey_distracted_driving_031418_v5_tag.pdf (accessed 4/2/2020)

¹⁰Tison J, Chaudhary N, Cosgrove L. National phone survey on distracted driving attitudes and behaviors. (Report No. DOT HS 811 555). Washington (DC): NHTSA; 2011. Available from: URL: <http://www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/nti/pdf/811555.pdf>. [Cited May 9, 2014].

Think**First**

National Injury Prevention Foundation

Contact a local ThinkFirst chapter to schedule a ThinkFirst For Teens presentation on preventing traffic-related injuries!

Thank you for Supporting Think**First** For Teens and Teen Road Safety
www.thinkfirst.org