

Distracted Driving Fact Sheet

Do you ever find yourself not focusing fully on your driving? Do you sometimes do the following while driving?

- Tune the radio
- Eat, drink, or smoke
- Pick something up from the floor or between the seats
- Read or write
- Reach for something in the glove compartment
- Talk on the cell phone
- Send or read text messages
- Clean the inside of the windshield
- Argue with another passenger
- Turn around to look at your children in the back seat or look at them in the rearview mirror
- Break up fights between your kids
- Comb or brush your hair
- Put on makeup
- Put on contact lenses or use eye drops
- Shave
- File, clip, or polish your nails

If you do any of those things when driving, you are guilty of distracted driving, and you are putting yourself and others at risk.

Here are some sobering facts, from various studies:

1. 80% of all crashes and 65 percent of near crashes involve some type of distraction. (Source: Virginia Tech 100-car study for NHTSA)
2. Nearly 6,000 people died in 2008 in crashes involving a distracted or inattentive driver (16% of all fatalities), and more than half a million were injured. (NHTSA)
3. Using a cell phone use while driving, whether it's 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. (Source: University of Utah) It's essentially the same as driving while drunk!
4. Driving while using a cell phone reduces the amount of brain activity associated with driving by 37 percent. (Source: Carnegie Mellon)
5. Talking on a cell phone reduces the amount of brain activity associated with driving by 37%. You're driving with 2/3 of a brain!
6. Texting raises the risk of a crash or near crash by 23.2 times!
7. "Texting took a driver's focus away from the road for an average of 4.6 seconds—enough time...to travel the length of a football field at 55 mph." (reported by CNET's Jennifer Guevin)
8. Drivers who use cell phones are four times more likely to be in a crash while using a cell phone. (1997 *New England Journal of Medicine* examination of hospital records and 2005 Insurance Institute for Highway Safety study linking crashes to cell phone records).
9. Cell phone use contributes to an estimated 6 percent of all crashes, which equates to 636,000 crashes, 330,000 injuries, 12,000 serious injuries and 2,600 deaths each year. (Harvard Center of Risk Analysis).

10. Using a cell phone while driving increases your chance of getting into a crash by 400%. When dialing a phone number or engaging in intense conversation, you're not watching the road like you should. A "hands-free" apparatus is helpful, but they can't prevent you from becoming involved in a conversation and losing concentration. Your best defense is to pull off the road and stop in a safe place before using your phone.

11. The worst offenders are the youngest and least-experienced drivers: men and women under 20 years of age. (NHTSA)

12. There is no difference in the cognitive distraction between hand-held and hands-free devices. (Simulator studies at the U. of Utah.) That means that you are just as distracted when using a hands-free device as when you are holding the cell phone. Of course, holding the phone also adds to your risk by tying up one hand.

Add it all up, and you can easily see that you are at a MUCH higher risk of being injured or killed if you try to drive when on a cell phone, when texting, or when distracted in some other way!