



Get the Facts: Distracted Driving

In a Nutshell

If your eyes, your hands or your attention are not fully on driving, you're distracted.

What do we mean by distraction?

Simply put, distraction is anything that takes your attention away from driving. This includes:

- Using the phone or texting
- Adjusting vehicle controls and electronics including navigation and sound systems
- Other passengers, especially children
- Driving an unfamiliar vehicle or route
- Unsecured cargo
- Eating or reading
- Intense or emotional conversations
- Emotional state and/or serious personal problems
- Grooming

Sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for 5 seconds — at 55 mph, that's like driving the length of a football field with eyes closed.

During daylight hours, an estimated 660,000 drivers are using cell phones. That's enormous potential for deaths and injuries.

Why does it matter?

Driving leaves no room for distraction. Driving instructors estimate that a driver makes an average 200 decisions every mile they drive.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports that in 2020 alone, 3,142 people were killed, and 425,000 more were injured in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers with teens the largest age group reported as distracted in fatal crashes.

Drivers who are distracted fail to recognize potential hazards in the road and react more slowly to traffic conditions, decreasing their "margin of safety."

Play it safe!

- Put away the phone, send callers to voicemail, pull off the road to call/text or go hands-free. It's the law in most states!
- Know your vehicle. Pre-set the climate control, sound systems other and identify the location of signals, wipers and lights.
- Plan your route and leave a little earlier; you'll get there safely and less stressed.





- Postpone complex or emotional conversations with passengers or callers until you arrive at your destination.
- Don't text or call your teen drivers when they may be behind the wheel.
- Secure kids, pets and cargo. Follow through with that threat to unruly children stop the car but do it safely and legally!
- Scan the roadway continually for situations that could require you to take quick action.

Sources: Minnesota Network of Employers for Traffic Safety
Network of Employers for Traffic Safety
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

