National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

Distracted Driving Overview

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April 7, 2011
In 2009, nearly 5,550 people were killed and an additional 448,000 were injured in crashes involving distraction, accounting for 16% of fatal crashes.

An estimated 20% of injury crashes were reported to have involved distraction.
The primary responsibility of the driver is to operate a motor vehicle safely. The task of driving requires full attention and focus.

Drivers should resist engaging in any activity that takes their eyes and attention off the road for more than a couple of seconds.

Even a second or two can make all the difference in a driver being able to avoid a crash.
Distraction is anything that can take visual, manual or cognitive resources away from the driving task.

Distraction occurs when drivers divert their attention from the driving task.

Three Types of Distraction

1. Visual – Eyes off the road
2. Manual - Hands off the wheel
3. Cognitive - Mind off the driving task
Most crashes involve a relatively unique set of circumstances that make precise calculations of risk for engaging in different behaviors very difficult.

Available research does not allow us to precisely determine what is the riskiest behavior.
In 2009, 9 percent of vehicle drivers were using some type of phone (hand-held or hands-free) in a typical daylight moment.

**Greater Exposure = Greater Risk**
People of all ages are using a variety of hand-held devices, such as cell phones, mp3 players, personal digital assistants, and navigation devices, when they are behind the wheel.
State Hand Held Cell Phone Bans

Except for Maryland, all these laws are primary enforcement—

An officer may cite a driver for using a handheld cell phone without any other traffic offense taking place.
September 2009: 1\textsuperscript{st} Distracted Driving Summit held

October 2009: Executive Order to ban texting messaging among Federal employees and contractors

December 2009: \url{www.distraction.gov} launched

February 2010: Sample Law to Prohibit Texting While Driving released

April 2010: 1\textsuperscript{st} Hartford/Syracuse Distracted Driving HVE demo Kick-off

April 2010: NHTSA released the agency wide Overview of the Driver Distraction Program

July 2010: NHTSA released its behavioral focused Distracted Driving Program Plan

September 2010: 2\textsuperscript{nd} Distracted Driving Summit held
What is NHTSA doing to try to combat this problem?

NHTSA has implemented a multi-year Distraction Plan and Research Agenda that will further examine driver communications and entertainment devices, including cell phones, and will also continue to monitor the research of others on this subject.
NHTSA’s Driver Distraction Program Plan

Distraction Plan

Eliminate Crashes Due to Distraction

Initiative 1
Improve the Understanding of the Problem
Data Approach

Initiative 2
Reduce Workload from Interfaces
Vehicle Approaches

Initiative 3
Keep Drivers Safe

Initiative 4
Recognize Risks and Consequences
Behavioral Approach

NHTSA’s Goal
Eliminate Crashes Due to Distraction
Distracted Driving Initiative 1

Improve the understanding of the problem: Improve police reporting, analyze additional crash data, continue observational, awareness, hazard anticipation, and naturalistic studies, etc.

National Distracted Driving Survey

NHTSA is currently conducting the first National Distracted Phone Driving Survey
Reduce workload from interfaces: Develop test procedures to evaluate in-vehicle and nomadic devices.
Distracted Driving Initiative 3

Keep distracted drivers safe: Improve crash warning systems.
Recognize risks and consequences: Assess the effect of high visibility law enforcement and targeted media campaigns.
Behavioral Approach

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- Public Awareness Campaign
- Federal Employee Texting Ban
- Federal Ban on Texting for Commercial Truck Drivers
- Sample Law to Prohibit Texting While Driving
- FRA Distracted Operator Final Rule
- PHMSA Texting Rule

“Every time we climb into the driver’s seat, we all have a responsibility for keeping our roads safe by putting away cell phones and other distractions.”

- Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood
President Obama issued an Executive Order prohibiting federal employees from texting while driving on government business or with government equipment.

Contractors conducting government business are also prohibited from texting while performing work on behalf of the government.
Federal (behavioral based) Efforts

- Evaluating effectiveness of high visibility enforcement on reducing distracted driving
- Publishing guidance for federal texting ban
- **Faces of Distracted Driving**
- Assessing potential of education and training programs
- Expanding public/private partnerships
Behavioral Activities On the Horizon

- $50 million distracted driving incentive grant program proposed in President Obama's FY2012 budget
- Statewide distracted driving enforcement demonstration
- Targeted media messages
- Distracted driving law enforcement protocols and tool-kit
- Publish guidance for federal ban
NHTSA will further evaluate the widespread application of the high visibility enforcement model to ascertain its effectiveness to raise public awareness about the risks of distracted driving.

NHTSA is collaborating with FMCSA to incorporate commercial motor vehicle components into the statewide demos.
Distracted Driving Tool-Kit

- Develop and promote a “how to” guide on conducting distracted driving high visibility enforcement campaigns to include promising enforcement strategies

- Provide talking points, templates and other resources to State and local communities

- Create Uniform Highway Safety Guidelines for distracted driving

- Develop resources for judges and prosecutors
NHTSA continues to strengthen and build new partnerships with other DOT modes and federal agencies, non-profit organizations and businesses to spread the word about distracted driving issues, data and resources.

- Secretary LaHood and the National Safety Council (NSC) helped launch *FocusDriven*, the first national nonprofit organization devoted specifically to raising awareness about the dangers of Distracted Driving.

- NHTSA will partner with the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS) during *Drive Safety Work Week* in October 2011 to raise awareness (thru employee networks) about the dangers of distracted driving.
Distraction.gov

DOT Action
- Research and Data
- Stats and Facts
- Campaign Tools

State Laws
- FAQ’s
- Media
Tools You Can Use:

- DOT and Consumer’s Union Brochure for Teens
- Distracted Driving Strategy
- Put It Down (Social Norming) Logo
- Phone In One Hand. Ticket In The Other (Enforcement) Logo
- Broadcast Materials
How can we work together?

- **Getting the message out**

- Decade of Action for Road Safety (to be launched May 11, 2011)
Thank You!

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Questions?