



Texting & Driving in Vermont



Presented by Commissioner
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Vermont D.M.V.



A National Epidemic...

- In 2009, Vermont's legislature commenced a discussion on the dangers of texting while driving.
- Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood described this problem as a "*national epidemic.*"
- Vermont DMV commenced a bold campaign to educate drivers on the dangers of texting while driving.
- Our model expanded on a program from North Carolina.

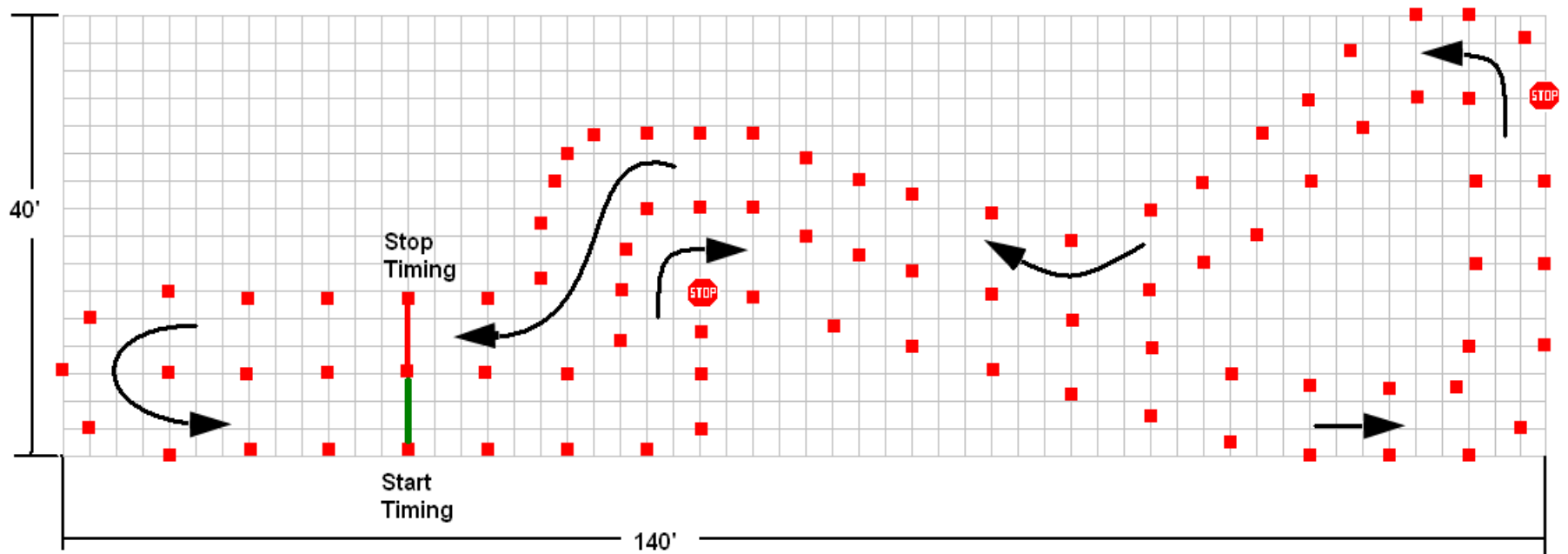
Vermont's Program

- Using an electric golf cart, a few traffic signs and a host of traffic cones, a driving course was designed to put participants through their paces...




Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles

Distracted Driving Course Layout



 Stop Sign

 Cone

Additional cones may be used to help keep participants on course. Signs (arrows) may also be helpful in guiding participants around the course.

This layout uses approximately 80-100 cones. DMV recommends using cones 18 to 24 inches in height.

Layout is 40' by 140' in size. Layout may be adjusted to fit other size areas.

Driving lane should be 6 feet wide. Lane width may need to be adjusted on some of the corners. Adjustments should not exceed 7 ½ feet in width.

Vehicle used for this layout is approximately 4 feet wide. If other width vehicles are used driving lane should be adjusted to 1 ½ times the vehicle width.

How it Works...

- Participants are required to navigate an electric golf cart through the course – first, without any texting. This is done to familiarize participants with the course and the golf cart's handling characteristics.



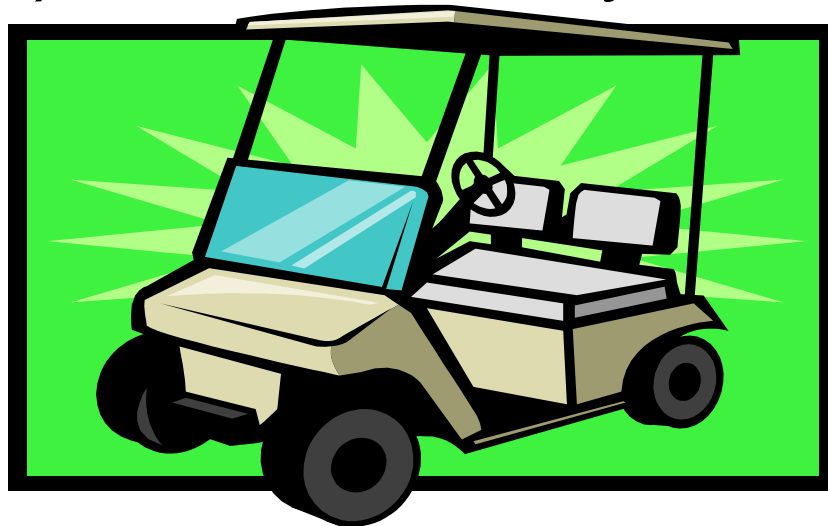
How it Works...

- After the first run, participants are asked to navigate the course a second time while texting their name and address to an observer.



Calculating Results...

- A participant's times and error rates are documented during both runs.
- Errors are counted any time a participant strikes a cone, has to readjust their vehicle (*i.e. backing up*) or fails to obey a traffic control sign.



The Results...

- Vermont DMV administered a total of **30** texting while driving events throughout Vermont and New Hampshire.
- **681** individuals participated, while hundreds of others observed on the sidelines.
- While texting and driving, reaction times slowed **25%** and participant error rates increased **270%**
- **79.7%** of participants were between the ages of **15 – 20**.
- **82.2%** of participants found the course very useful and **78.2%** stated they would never text and drive.



Results...

- Vermont DMV received international attention for this program and our manual has been requested by dozens of law enforcement agencies and driver educators throughout the United States and Canada.
- Channel One – a high school news program reaching over 6 million teens in classrooms nationwide featured our program, which aired this past fall.



Vermont's Texting Law

- On June 1, 2010, Governor James Douglas signed Vermont's texting bill, making it illegal to text while driving.
- Operators under 18 are prohibited from using any portable electronic devices, while drivers over the age of 18 are subject to a graduated system of fines ranging from \$156.00 and 2 points to \$329.00 and 5 points. Junior operators are also subject to a 30 - day recall of their operating privileges.



To obtain our program manual...

Contact:

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or call

802-828-2067