

What is distracted driving?

Distracted driving is any activity that could divert a person's attention away from the primary task of driving. All distractions endanger driver, passenger, and bystander safety. These types of distractions include:

- Texting
- Using a cell phone or smartphone
- Eating and drinking
- Talking to passengers
- Grooming
- Reading, including maps
- Using a navigation system
- Watching a video
- Adjusting a radio, CD player, or MP3 player

But, because text messaging requires visual, manual, and cognitive attention from the driver, it is by far the most alarming distraction.

The best way to end distracted driving is to educate all Americans about the danger it poses. On this page, you'll find facts and statistics that are powerfully persuasive. If you don't already think distracted driving is a safety problem, please take a moment to learn more. And, as with everything on Distraction.gov, please share these facts with others. Together, we can help save lives.

Key Facts and Statistics

In 2014, 3,179 people were killed, and 431,000 were injured in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers.

As of December 2014, 169.3 billion text messages were sent in the US (includes PR, the Territories, and Guam) every month.

Ten percent of all drivers 15 to 19 years old involved in fatal crashes were reported as distracted at the time of the crashes. This age group has the largest proportion of drivers who were distracted at the time of the crashes.

Drivers in their 20s are 23 percent of drivers in all fatal crashes, but are 27 percent of the distracted drivers and 38 percent of the distracted drivers who were using cell phones in fatal crashes.

The percentage of drivers text-messaging or visibly manipulating handheld devices increased from 1.7 percent in 2013 to 2.2 percent in 2014. Since 2007, young drivers (age 16 to 24) have been observed manipulating electronic devices at higher rates than older drivers.

At any given daylight moment across America, approximately 660,000 drivers are using cell phones or manipulating electronic devices while driving, a number that has held steady since 2010.

A 2015 Erie Insurance distracted driving survey reported that drivers do all sorts of dangerous things behind the wheel including brushing teeth and changing clothes. The survey also found that one-third of drivers admitted to texting while driving, and three-quarters saying they've seen others do it.

Five seconds is the average time your eyes are off the road while texting. When traveling at 55mph, that's enough time to cover the length of a football field blindfolded.

Smartphone ownership is growing. In 2011, 52 percent of drivers reported owning a smartphone, and by 2014 that number had grown to 80 percent. The greatest increases in smartphone ownership are among adults age 40 and older.

More than half (53%) of all adult cellphone owners have been on the giving or receiving end of a distracted walking encounter.

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Source: 2009, VTTI

An infographic featuring a central smartphone icon. The screen of the phone displays the percentage '73%' in large, bold, black font. Below the percentage is a horizontal progress bar that is approximately 73% filled with orange. The background is dark brown with a pattern of lighter brown, angular, crystalline shapes. Two orange diagonal lines cross behind the phone. At the bottom of the phone icon, there are four small, light gray icons: a left-pointing arrow, a magnifying glass, a house, and a square with a smaller square inside.

73%

of drivers 18 to 20 years old admit
to texting while driving.

Source: 2012, NHTSA



**Only
about
half**



of drivers under 25 would say
something to another driver who

was sending a text message
or e-mail while driving.

Source: 2012, NHTSA