

## Texting and Driving

Texting and driving causes more than 1.5 million motor vehicle accidents every year, killing 11 teenagers every single day. And this is only one type of distracted driving - it's an epidemic that takes many forms and claims lives without discrimination.

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

The North Dakota Century Code bans the transmission of electronic messages (this includes writing, reading, or sending a text message) while operating a motor vehicle that is part of traffic.

## Drive by Example

Education experts call them “teachable moments,” opportunities to demonstrate to young people (or even other adults) in a real-world situation what to do or what not to do when faced with a problem or situation. The best way to teach them may not be through words they can tune out, but by driving the way you want **them** to drive.

## Take the Pledge

“I will focus on the road when I am behind the wheel, and won't put my own life and the lives of others in danger by checking texts, calls, emails, and other distractions while driving.”

\*Your Name Here

## Learn More



Distraction.gov  
[www.distraction.gov](http://www.distraction.gov)



National Highway Traffic  
Safety Administration  
[www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov)



USAA Educational Foundation  
[www.usaaedfoundation.org](http://www.usaaedfoundation.org)



Parents Central  
Help shape your teen into a  
safe, responsible driver.  
[www.safercar.gov/parents](http://www.safercar.gov/parents)



National Safety Council  
(NSC)  
[www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org)



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## Distracted Driving

Distracted driving is not only a local concern, but also a national concern. Thousands of motorists, their passengers, and pedestrians are at risk from actions that may seem like nothing but can have far-reaching consequences. Take the time to learn what you can to be someone that cares not only about yourself, but also about the people in your life, your vehicle, and those in your community.



## *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.

The best way to end distracted driving is to be educated about the dangers it poses.

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## *Top Four Distractions*

Of all the things people do while driving, most can be categorized in four major areas:

### ◆ **Visual distractions**

looking at a map or something on the side of the road

### ◆ **Audible distractions**

a radio playing too loudly or a passenger talking to you

### ◆ **Physical distractions**

answering a phone call or eating

### ◆ **Mental or cognitive distractions**

thinking about a problem at work or what you need at the store

## *The Great Multitasking Lie*

Most people know that texting while driving is a dangerous behavior, but many don't fully grasp the idea that having cell phone conversations in the car is also risky.

### **Myth #1—Drivers can multitask.**

Contrary to popular belief, the human brain cannot multitask. Driving and talking on a cell phone are two thinking tasks that involve many areas of the brain. Instead of processing both simultaneously, the brain rapidly switches between two cognitive activities.

### **Myth #2—Talking to someone on a cell phone is no different than talking to someone in the car.**

A 2008 study cited by the University of Utah found that drivers distracted by cell phones are **more oblivious** to changing traffic conditions because they are the only ones in the conversation who are aware of the road. In contrast, drivers with adult passengers in their cars have an **extra set of eyes and ears** to help keep the drivers alert of on-coming traffic problems. People on the other end of a driver's cell phone cannot do that.

### **Myth #3—Hands-free devices eliminate the danger of cell phone use during driving.**

Whether handheld or hands-free, cell phone conversations while driving are risky because the distraction to the brain remains. Drivers talking on cell phones can miss seeing up to 50 percent of their driving environments, including pedestrians and red lights. They look but don't see.

### **Myth #4—Drivers talking on cell phones still have a quicker reaction time than those who are driving under the influence.**

A controlled driving simulator study conducted by the University of Utah found that drivers using cell phones had **slower reaction times** than drivers with a .08 blood alcohol content, the legal intoxication limit. There is a simple solution—drivers talking on cell phones can immediately eliminate their risk by **hanging up the phone**, while drunk drivers remain at risk until they sober up.

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## *Top Ways to Avoid Distractions*

- ◆ Plan ahead. Get what you need in advance.
- ◆ Know your route. Use your GPS or read maps beforehand.
- ◆ Fix your hair, makeup, and attire at home.
- ◆ Don't eat, drink, read, or smoke in the vehicle.
- ◆ Keep the radio volume to a reasonable level.
- ◆ Save the video watching for home.
- ◆ Put the phone close-by for emergency use only.
- ◆ Let calls go to voicemail and listen to messages later.
- ◆ Ask passengers to keep conversations with you to a minimum.
- ◆ Be aware of vehicles around you and focus, focus, focus.