



DISTRACTED DRIVING

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Distracted Driving

Distracted driving includes any activity that diverts a driver's attention from driving, such as texting, eating, applying makeup or reading billboards on the side of the road, etc.

HOW DOES IT AFFECT THE UNITED STATES?

- In 2014, 3,179 people were killed and 431,000 people were injured in crashes where the driver was distracted.¹
- In 2014, law enforcement reported distracted driving as a factor in 16 percent of all motor vehicle crashes, 18 percent of crashes resulting in injury, and 10 percent of crashes resulting in death.¹
- Distraction is more likely to be a factor in fatal crashes among teen drivers than any other age group. Ten percent of all teen drivers involved in fatal crashes were distracted at the time of the crash.¹
- Almost one third (31%) of drivers between the ages of 18 and 64 years old reported texting or emailing at least once while driving in the last 30 days.²
- In 2010, distracted driving cost the nation \$46 billion, an average of \$148 for every person in the United States.³

HOW DOES IT AFFECT MARYLAND?

- From 2009-2013, on average 232 people were killed and 2,348 people were injured each year in crashes involving a distracted driver.⁴
- Distracted driving in Maryland in 2013 led to 182 deaths and 26,995 injuries.⁵

HOW DO WE ADDRESS THIS PROBLEM?

- Many states are enacting laws—such as banning texting while driving, or using graduated driver licensing systems for teen drivers—to help raise awareness about the dangers of distracted driving and to keep it from occurring. However, the effectiveness of cell phone and texting laws on decreasing distracted driving related crashes requires further study.²
- Currently, 46 states, DC, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the United States Virgin Islands ban text messaging for all drivers. All but 5 have primary enforcement.⁶ See Table 1 for laws restricting cellphone use and texting (as of April 2016).⁶
- Maryland has a primary ban on text messaging and a primary ban on using a handheld cell phone while driving (effective October 2013).⁶ These types of bans, if rigorously enforced, may be effective in reducing cell phone use while driving;⁷ however, it is too soon to assess the impact of well-enforced cell phone laws on crashes.⁸
- Highway engineering to make roadways safer for distracted drivers is a promising strategy. Specific strategies include providing safe stopping and resting areas and installing rumble strips.⁸
- Changing social norms to make distracted driving less socially acceptable is a promising strategy⁸ as is technology that prevents drivers from using a cell phone while the vehicle is in motion.
- High Visibility Model (HVE) enforcement programs in Connecticut and New York have been shown to reduce hand-held cell phone talking and texting while driving. HVE combines law enforcement during specified periods and paid/earned media that addresses high enforcement methods.⁹

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Governor’s Highway Safety Association: <http://www.ghsa.org/html/stateinfo/bystate/md.html>
- Johns Hopkins Center for Injury Research and Policy: www.jhsph.edu/InjuryCenter
- National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC: www.cdc.gov/injury
- Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration: www.mdot.state.md.us
- Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration: <http://www.mva.maryland.gov/safety/distracteddriving.htm>
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA): www.nhtsa.dot.gov
- University of Maryland School of Medicine National Study Center for Trauma and Emergency Medical Systems (NSC): http://medschool.umaryland.edu/NSC_Trauma.asp

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