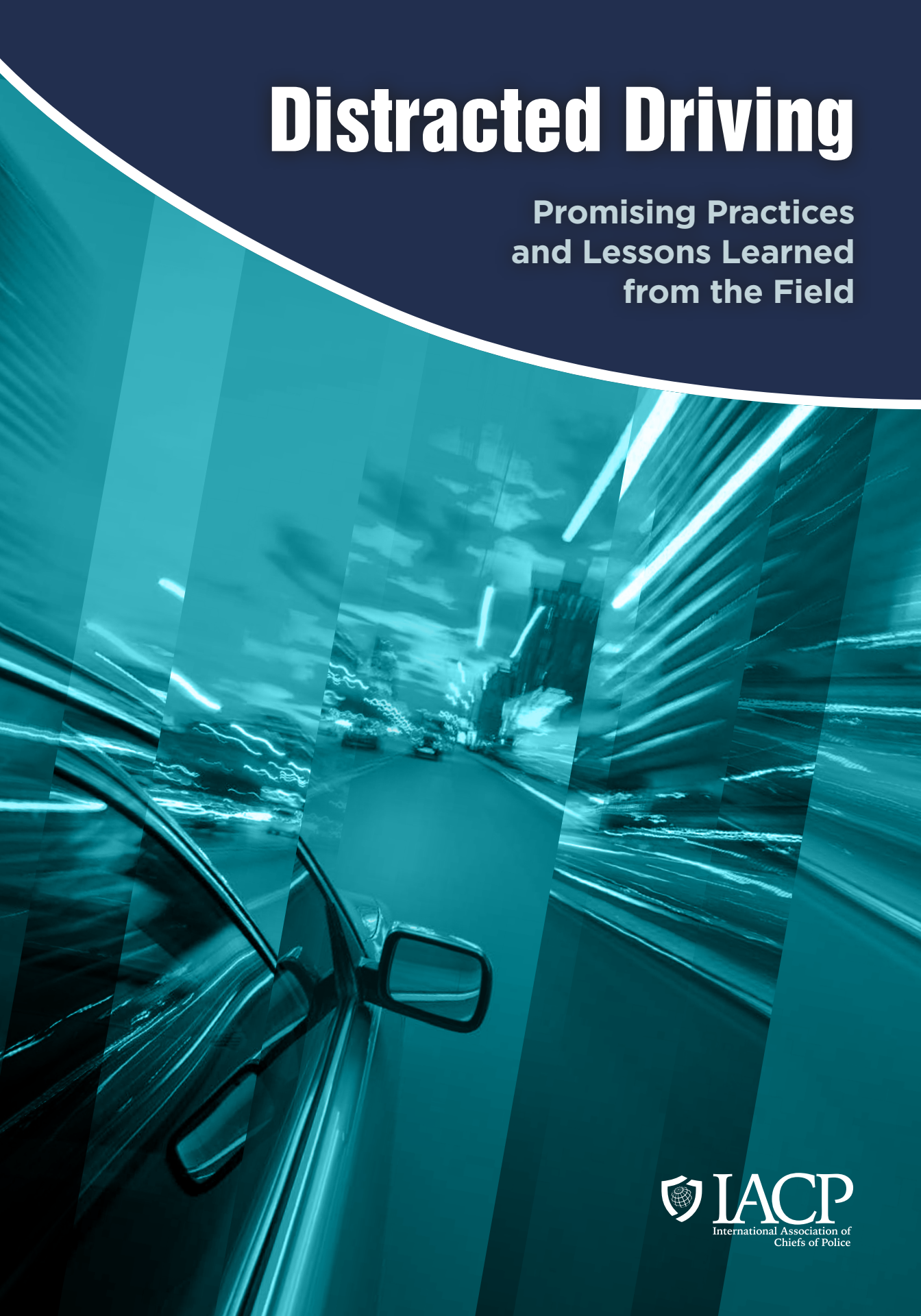


Distracted Driving

Promising Practices
and Lessons Learned
from the Field



This publication was sponsored by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, an operating administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation. The U.S. Department of Transportation desires widespread dissemination in the interests of information exchange. The opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Department of Transportation or the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The United States Government assumes no liability for its content or use thereof. If trade or manufacturers' names or products are mentioned, it is because they are considered essential to the subject of the publication and should not be construed as an endorsement. The United States Government does not endorse products or manufacturers.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	1
Community Education and Enforcement	
Dalton, Georgia, Police Department	4
Montgomery County, Maryland, Police Department	6
Ohio State Highway Patrol	7
Oro Valley, Arizona, Police Department	9
Officer Safety and Wellness	
New York State Police	12
Training, Research, and Education for Driving Safety (TREDS)	14
Distracted Driving Resource List	
IACP Resources	16
<i>Police Chief</i> Magazine	16
Federal Resources	17
Advocacy Organization Resources	17
Additional Resources	18
Resolutions	
Community Support for Traffic Safety	19
Support for Continued Development of Technology to Reduce Distracted Driving	20
Urging Elected Officials to Work with Law Enforcement to Ensure that Proposed Legislation is Clear, Enforceable and Does Not Discourage and/or Impede Traffic Enforcement Efforts	21



FOREWORD


Distracted driving is a misnomer. When drivers look away from the road to send a text message, for example, adjust their appearance, or program their radio, the consequences aren't merely distracting; they're devastating. So much so that every day, roughly nine people are killed and more than 1,000 injured in crashes involving distracted driving.¹ Although the number is tragic, it is not surprising, as distracted drivers are nearly four times as likely to be involved in crashes as those who are focused on driving² and drivers who are texting can be more than 20 times more likely to crash than focused drivers.³

Unfortunately, the problem is as abundant as the distractions that cause it: Today, there are more than 600 million passenger cars⁴ worldwide and 4.6 billion cell phone subscriptions.⁵

Because of its lethality, 20 states and the District of Columbia have passed laws banning the use of handheld cell phones while operating a motor vehicle as of September 2019. Additionally, 48 states and the District of Columbia have laws prohibiting texting while driving, and all but three are primary enforcement laws⁶ that allow officers to cite drivers for using a handheld cell phone without committing any other traffic offense.⁷

These laws address the usage of a hand-held device, and do not address activated ("Hands-free") functions. These functions — such as placing a voice call, sending a text message, or seeking directions — are still a source of

-
- 1 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, "Traffic Safety Facts Research Notes 2016: Distracted Driving," (2019, July 1). <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812517>
 - 2 Klauer, S.G., Dingus, T. A., Neale, V. L., Sudweeks, J.D., and Ramsey, D.J. (2006, April). The Impact of Driver Inattention on Near Crash/Crash Risk: An Analysis Using the 100-Car Study Data. DOT HS 810 594 Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.
 - 3 Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (2009, July 27). "New Data from VTTI Provides Insight into Cell Phone Use and Driving Distraction." Blacksburg, VA: Virginia Tech Transportation Institute. Available at http://www.vtti.vt.edu/PDF/7-22-09-VTTI-Press_Release_Cell_phones_and_Driver_Distraction.pdf
 - 4 Worldmapper (n/a). "Passenger Cars." South Yorkshire, United Kingdom: SASI Group (University of Sheffield) and Mark Newman (University of Michigan). <http://www.sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/worldmapper/display.php?selected=31>
 - 5 The Associated Press (2010, February 15). "Number of Cell Phones Worldwide Hits 4.6B." Retrieved from CBS News portal at <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/number-of-cell-phones-worldwide-hits-46b/>
 - 6 Governors Highway Safety Association, "Distracted Driving Laws by State," (2019, July 1). https://www.ghsa.org/sites/default/files/2019-04/DistractedDrivingLawChart_Apr19_2.pdf.
 - 7 Governor's Highway Safety Association, "Distracted Driving," (2019, July 1). <https://www.ghsa.org/state-laws/issues/Distracted-Driving>.



cognitive distraction and research suggests that hands-free devices offer no safety advantage when driving.⁸

Countries around the globe are taking action to stop distracted driving. Currently, 32 countries have passed laws banning cell phone use while driving and Portugal banned the use of cell phones, hand-held and hands-free, while driving.⁹

In partnership with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) is dedicated to giving law enforcement agencies the tools and resources needed to reduce fatal and injury crashes resulting from distracted driving, including data and information to help them educate policymakers about the importance of strong, enforceable traffic safety laws.

Officer safety is a priority and law enforcement officers are not exempt from distractions. Some of the biggest distractions they face are in their patrol vehicles. As their vehicles serve as a multitasking office, tools such as the radio, on-board computer, sirens, lights, and in-car technologies necessary for the job can present distraction. Other unnecessary risks to officers while on duty include use of personal cell phones, or other electronic devices. Law enforcement needs to ensure they hold themselves accountable providing officers with the policies and training necessary to minimize dangers posed by distracted driving.

There are three basic types of distraction:

- **Visual:** taking your eyes off the road;
- **Manual:** taking your hands off the wheel; and
- **Cognitive:** taking your focus away from driving¹⁰

Any non-driving activity that you engage in can pose as a distraction and increase your risk of being involved in a crash. Other activities that can cause potential distractions include eating and drinking, personal grooming, attending to a pet, programming your gps while driving, etc. Although hands-free devices are an alternative to using a phone, these devices can still cause distraction while driving. It is estimated that drivers talking on their cell phones or using

8 National Safety Council, "Understanding the Distracted Brain: Why Driving While Using Hands-Free Cell Phones is Risky Behavior," (2019, July 3). <https://www.nsc.org/Portals/0/Documents/DistractedDrivingDocuments/Cognitive-Distraction-White-Paper.pdf>

9 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, "Distracted Driving Global Fact Sheet," (2019, July 1). https://usdotblog.typepad.com/files/6983_distracteddrivingfs_5-17_v2.pdf

10 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, "Policy Statement and Compiled FAQs on Distracted Driving." (2019, July 1). <http://www.nhtsa.gov.edgesuite-staging.net/Driving+Safety/Distracted+Driving/Policy+Statement+and+Compiled+FAQs+on+Distracted+Driving>.

the hands-free devices can miss seeing up to 50 percent of their driving environment,¹¹ including visual cues such as stop signs and red lights.¹²

Because civilians and law enforcement officers alike engage in distracted driving, this toolkit is meant to provide law enforcement chief executives, command staff, first-line supervisors, and patrol officers with effective strategies that have been used by others for improving distracted driving education and enforcement in the communities they serve, along with tactics to reduce officer distraction in patrol vehicles. Included are distracted driving infographics; promising practices for public education, enforcement, and officer safety; IACP resolutions; and a comprehensive list of resources to help agencies address distracted driving crashes.

11 National Safety Council, "Understanding the Distracted Brain: Why Driving While Using Hands-Free Cell Phones is Risky Behavior," (2019, July 3). <https://www.nsc.org/Portals/0/Documents/DistractedDrivingDocuments/Cognitive-Distracton-White-Paper.pdf>

12 National Safety Council, "Understanding the Distracted Brain: Why Driving While Using Hands-Free Cell Phones is Risky Behavior," (2019, July 3). <https://www.nsc.org/Portals/0/Documents/DistractedDrivingDocuments/Cognitive-Distracton-White-Paper.pdf>



COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND ENFORCEMENT

Dalton, Georgia, Police Department

Distracted driving is as much a concern for citizens as it is for law enforcement. Take the community of Dalton, Georgia, for example. Every three years, the Dalton Police Department (DPD) conducts a community survey that's mailed to citizens, who are asked to identify the policing issues that are most important to them. In 2014, more than two-thirds of residents (68 percent) said the top public issue in Dalton was distracted driving, including unsafe driving behaviors such as texting, grooming, and eating behind the wheel. This was up from 57 percent just three years prior and was more than the number of residents who said their top concerns were drugs, gangs, and public intoxication. As it turned out, residents were right to be concerned: distracted driving was a factor in 51 percent of local crashes in 2014.

The DPD shared its community's concerns and conducted a visual survey of 100 drivers at one of Dalton's most crash-prone intersections. There, it found that over half of observed motorists (55 percent) were engaged in some type of distracted behavior. The DPD—whose strategic plan cites reducing the number of vehicle crashes on Dalton roadways as one of the department's principal goals—responded by using a combination of specialized training, targeted education, and concentrated enforcement.

The DPD focused its efforts around a large distracted-driving enforcement operation known as *Operation: Thumbs Up*. Taking place in October 2014, which the DPD designated as "Distractober," the effort included not only enforcement and education, but also officer training, as half of the DPD's patrol officers received special pre-shift training in advance of the campaign to help them identify violations both before and after crashes.

During conversations with motorists, officers determined that many of them did not perceive distracted behaviors as actually distracting. Education was therefore an important component of *Operation: Thumbs Up* and Distractober, during which officers reached 1,958 drivers and students with distracted driving messages by:

- Speaking to motorists about the dangers of distracted driving during traffic stops;
- Handing out rubber thumb rings at education events reminding motorists not to text and drive;
- Publishing distracted driving articles, videos, and statistics on social media;
- Teaching distracted driving classes to high school students; and
- Partnering with local restaurants, several of which displayed distracted driving messages on their exterior signs during the month of October.

All told, officers conducted 74 traffic enforcement details related to distracted driving in 2014, including 24 during *Operation: Thumbs Up*. Through each detail, an officer stood or parked in an unmarked vehicle near the roadway and called out observed offenses to other officers in the area. Collectively, these enforcement details yielded 718 distracted driving citations and warnings, including 114 issued during Distractober alone. That was up substantially from 418 in 2013 and 116 in 2012.

The combination of training, education, and enforcement produced significant results. The DPD observed a 23.7 percent reduction in distraction-related crashes in 2014 compared to 2013, as well as a 13.5 percent reduction in distraction-related injuries.

Promising Practices

Operation: Thumbs Up and Distractober yielded several valuable takeaways for the DPD and the community:

- Community input through tools such as citizen surveys can help agencies identify critical traffic safety issues in their communities.
- Organized, short-term education and enforcement campaigns can help agencies target specific traffic problems in a meaningful way.
- Traffic stops provide an opportunity to educate drivers as well as enforce laws.

Montgomery County, Maryland, Police Department



In Maryland, the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) decided to shed some light on the growing distracted driving epidemic—literally.

It began in 2013, when the State of Maryland enacted a hands-free driving law that banned the use of handheld devices by drivers while operating a motor vehicle. As the state's most populous county, Montgomery County needed to develop a method to easily scan for distracted driving without jeopardizing officer safety. MCPD therefore implemented a new strategy called “channelization,” which creates a safety area with enhanced lighting so officers can easily observe both cell phone and seat belt violations.

Channelization zones utilize cones and barrels to narrow roads and force traffic into specific lanes, as is done during roadway construction projects. Inside the cones, however, are officers who stand outside their vehicles and use portable lighting units that illuminate the area so officers can easily see violations inside vehicles. When a violation is observed, the driver is flagged into a safety area located further down the road, where they receive the appropriate citation.

Channelizations, it's important to note, are not checkpoints. During a channelization, the roadway is narrowed to enhance the visibility and safety of the operation, but at no time is traffic stopped. Instead, officers simply observe traffic and pull over drivers who commit moving violations in plain view.

Promising Practices

The MCPD found that channelization can be an effective means for enhancing distracted driving enforcement. To successfully implement it, it found, law enforcement should:

- Utilize either law enforcement vehicles with emergency equipment or construction equipment such as cones, barrels, light towers, flares, and signage;
- Focus efforts on arterial roadways and ramp systems, which are best suited to channelizations; and
- Avoid conducting channelizations on high-speed roadways like interstates, where officer safety is compromised.

Ohio State Highway Patrol

Distracted driving is lethal.

That's certainly the case in Ohio, where the Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) reported nearly 14,000 distraction-related crashes in 2017 alone. Those crashes resulted in nearly 5,000 injury and 52 fatal crashes—doubling the number from 2016 to 2017.


Although lawmakers have tried to address the problem—it's illegal for Ohio drivers under 18 to use any “electronic wireless communication device” behind the wheel, and for all Ohio motorists to text while driving—legal remedies have gone only so far. Despite prohibitions, for instance, phone usage and texting/emailing still caused 25 percent of all distraction-related crashes in Ohio in 2017, and 39 percent of those that were fatal. In the same year, “other” distractions—including passengers, food, and music—caused 58 percent of all distraction-related crashes and 48 percent of those that were fatal.

Because the tragic consequences of distracted driving are similar to those of other traffic safety issues, the OSHP hypothesized that it could positively impact the problem by applying the same tactics that it has already applied successfully to other consequential traffic problems. To test its hypothesis, OSHP therefore launched a statewide campaign to remind drivers to keep their eyes on the road, using two tactics that have already moved the needle in other traffic safety realms: high visibility and data-based education and enforcement.

With data-driven assistance from the OSHP's Statistical Analysis Unit (SAU), post and district commanders can identify specific distracted driving problem areas across the state in order to direct resources more effectively toward the distractions that are most likely to cause crashes. The OSHP SAU analyzes and maps data captured in traffic stops, crashes, and case activity to identify trends and inform resource allocation.

In a monthly media bulletin, SAU publicly reports distracted driving crash data that also underlies a Distracted Driving Safety Corridor planned and executed by OSHP in partnership with the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). The corridor's goal is improving safety while reducing crashes, fatalities, and injuries along one of Ohio's busiest interstates, a stretch of which was identified as a high-risk corridor using the aforementioned data. Populating the corridor are signs advising motorists not to text and drive, as well as law enforcement officers whose focus is educating and enforcing distracted driving and texting laws.

The OSHP has placed signage at 14 on-ramps and elsewhere throughout the corridor, alerting motorists that they are entering the corridor and informing them that it is a high-enforcement zone. Additional signage throughout the corridor reminds motorists of the dangers of distracted driving.



Enforcement within the Distracted Driving Safety Corridor is complemented by education in local communities outside of it. In fact, as of 2018 the OSHP had conducted 95 educational distracted driving presentations around the state. Troopers speak at high schools, civic organizations, safety days, and county fairs providing important information on the dangers of distracted driving. In recognition of its efforts, the Ohio Traffic Safety Office has awarded the OSHP with a distracted driving traffic safety grant with which to expand distracted driving education and enforcement.

In support of the OSHP's continuing efforts, SAU closely monitors and provides statewide data results to help the agency evaluate its distracted driving efforts. The data provides commanders with the necessary tools to refine educational and enforcements efforts in pursuit of lowering and one day eliminating distracted driving crashes. State lawmakers likewise have continued their efforts by passing House Bill 95 in 2018, which broadens the definition of distracted driving and raises the associated fine for drivers who commit violations.¹³

A press conference held on April 3, 2018, officially kicked off the Distracted Driving Safety Corridor as part of National Distracted Driving Awareness month. Early results of the corridor's success in the second quarter of 2018 showed that overall crashes decreased by 38 percent; that total fatal and injury crashes decreased by 47 percent; that total enforcement stops decreased by 15 percent; and that distracted driving violations increased by 320 percent. By the third quarter of 2018, total crashes were down 44 percent; fatal and injury crashes were down 10 percent; enforcement stops were down 58 percent; and distracted driving violations were down 60 percent.

Promising Practices

The OSHP's education and enforcement efforts have yielded several valuable lessons for law enforcement agencies that want to impact the distracted driving epidemic:

- Crash data can help law enforcement target and calibrate distracted driving education and enforcement for maximum impact.
- As with other traffic safety issues, like speeding, high-visibility enforcement can deter distracted driving behaviors with positive effect.
- Education—both on roads and in communities—keeps distracted driving hazards top of mind for the motoring public.

¹³ "Ohio State Highway Patrol Initiative Focuses on Distracted Driving" WKBN online, last modified April 12, 2019, <https://www.wkbn.com/news/ohio/ohio-state-highway-patrol-initiative-focuses-on-distracteddriving/1920938489>.

Oro Valley, Arizona, Police Department


In a July 2016 survey in IACP's *Police Chief Magazine* discovered that 48 percent of police chiefs believe distracted driving is the top traffic safety concern in their communities—surpassing even speeding, which only 18 percent of police chiefs cited as their community's top traffic safety concern.

But statistics pale in impact compared to stories. When powerful testimony fell on ears in Oro Valley, Arizona, it compelled local government and police to act.

That testimony arrived in spring 2016, when a local resident brought his concerns about distracted driving to the Oro Valley Police Department (OVPD) and the town council. This meeting occurred shortly after a distracted driver hit and seriously injured a police volunteer's daughter, who months later died as a result of her injuries. At the time, Arizona did not have any laws regarding cell phone use while driving. The meeting therefore catalyzed a serious discussion about whether Oro Valley should wait for state lawmakers to pass statewide distracted driving legislation or proceed with action of its own. Ultimately, local stakeholders decided to host an event called "A Community Conversation on Distracted Driving."

Hosted at a local hotel by OVPD officials, town council members, and other town staff members, the event was promoted to the public via radio, television, print, and social media, as well as the local chamber of commerce. Oro Valley officials also collaborated with the local high school, local fire departments, Sprint Corp., and the Arizona chapter of LOOK! Save a Life to ensure attendance by subject matter experts who could help facilitate a productive discussion. During the event, speakers presented facts and information about distracted driving alongside moving anecdotes from numerous community members who were tragically impacted by distracted driving crashes. The latter, in particular, made for a very emotional evening, the events of which convinced local lawmakers and residents alike that something should be done to put the brakes on distracted driving.

The town council subsequently directed the OVPD and the town prosecutor's office to review relevant laws across the United States and draft a local ordinance to address distracted driving at the local level. The question of whether the law should mandate hands-free driving or ban texting was the subject of debate, as texting bans can be difficult to enforce since offending drivers often claim they were dialing, changing the radio station, or scrolling through apps instead of texting. In order to prevent crashes caused by distracted driving and change motorists' behaviors, local officials agreed that OVPD officers needed a law that could be easily enforced. The final hands-free ordinance—which was passed with full council support—therefore made it illegal to use a handheld "mobile telephone or portable electronic device" such as cell phones, GPS, music players, and gaming devices.



Educating the community about the new ordinance was critical and required most of the heavy lifting. Specifically, plans called for a nine-month warning period, educational events, advertising, and a social media campaign.

As part of the education piece, the hashtag #HandsFreeOV was created and spread by council members, police personnel, and Oro Valley staff, who also got the word out by nonconventional means—for instance, public service announcements in local movie theaters. Before movies started, the Oro Valley police chief greeted audiences with the message, “Be hands-free in OV.” The OVPD and Oro Valley officials also worked with the Oro Valley Chamber of Commerce and held an educational event at Oro Valley’s largest employer. Many questions about the new law—what devices were included, if the ordinance included emergencies, and whether drivers could touch their cell phones at all—were answered by law enforcement officials. By all accounts, everyone who spoke with the officers decided the law was reasonable and necessary.

The OVPD complemented education with community outreach by helping residents connect their devices to in-car systems. Individuals without in-car Bluetooth systems also received information about affordable aftermarket Bluetooth technologies. And because no amount of education will persuade the public to abide by a “hands-free” ordinance if police officers are not held to the same standard, commissioned officers received their own Bluetooth devices with which to be good ambassadors of the law—even if Bluetooth already was integrated into their patrol vehicle. The OVPD even went so far as to create policies mandating the use of Bluetooth by commissioned personnel.

Education further continued in the field, where officers were instructed to actively look for drivers violating the new ordinance and to educate them about it by distributing educational brochures during traffic stops. Education also came from a variable message board that was placed on one of the town’s busiest routes, reminding drivers about the ordinance as they passed it.

After the ordinance had been in place for three months, the OVPD released a 90-day update in which it informed the public that it had issued 766 warnings to drivers violating the hands-free ordinance in its first 90 days and would continue its educational campaign for six more months. The OVPD thanked community members for their support of the new law and for helping to make Oro Valley a safe place. This message of gratitude was vital, as the OVPD wanted the community to view distracted driving enforcement for what it truly is: a collaborative partnership.¹⁴

¹⁴ Ibid Olson.

Promising Practices:

During the course of its education and enforcement efforts, the OVPD learned several valuable lessons that can help other law enforcement agencies effectively address distracted driving in their communities:

- True stories from real people who have been impacted by it are often the best impetus for action around distracted driving.
- Distracted driving rules and enforcement must apply equally to citizens and law enforcement; when law enforcement leads by example, citizens follow.
- Because distracted driving is a community problem, any efforts to address it must engage citizens and law enforcement as equal partners.

OFFICER SAFETY AND WELLNESS

New York State Police

Law enforcement officers are not immune to distraction. In fact, distracted driving is as prevalent in law enforcement agencies as it is in the motoring public. And so are the dangers it represents, which can plague troopers, deputies, and officers just as easily as they do the public at large.

Despite an exemption for on-duty law enforcement officers in New York State's ban on the use of handheld mobile devices while driving,¹⁵ the New York State Police (NYSP) knew that mobile devices represented an unnecessary risk to officer safety, set a poor public example, and undermined its agency mission. The NYSP therefore joined other agencies—including the Washington State Patrol and the Florida Highway Patrol—in enacting internal policies restricting phone use while driving. These policies are prudent but necessary components in the agency's patrol operations and officer safety strategy because they allow for hands-free phone use under exigent circumstances but prohibit texting while the vehicle is in motion.

Officer distraction is often rationalized as an inherent risk of the occupation because distractions have been engineered into patrol vehicles. However, these distractions compromise the safety of officers and betray the primary responsibility of law enforcement leaders. Some distractions, such as the police radio, radar, or mobile data terminals, are necessary and contemporary tools of the trade, and fleets purposefully integrate them into patrol vehicles. But other distractions, such as cell phones and electronic devices, are brought into the work environment by officers and can significantly detract from their occupational responsibility to drive safely.

To reduce officer distraction, the NYSP implemented an officer-focused driver safety campaign utilizing the boot-up screen of the mobile data terminal in patrol vehicles, which featured images of preventable patrol car crashes and the message, "Think - Drive - Survive." Additionally, the NYSP embraced the Below 100 program, which aims to reduce law enforcement officer deaths

¹⁵ New York State, "Governor Cuomo Signs Law Strengthening Enforcement Against Drivers Caught Using Handheld Electronic Devices" (July 12, 2011). <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomosigns-law-strengthening-enforcement-against-drivers-caught-using-handheld>.

by exposing the errant behaviors that have caused them. The more officers understand risk management in a personal and meaningful way, the NYSP theorized, the more effective its safety policies will be.

But it's not enough to make officers aware of dangerous behaviors. The NYSP knows it also must give officers a safe working environment. As the focus of distracted driving for officers, patrol vehicles were therefore a major focus for the agency, whose fleet managers continually re-examine the safety of officers' mobile offices and encourage the adoption of new technologies that are available to reduce driver distraction and improve driver engagement. These include:

- Hands-free and voice technologies for activating emergency lights and sirens;
- Keyboard lockout software that disables mobile data terminals while the patrol car is in motion; and
- Cell phone apps that auto-reply to text messages, notifying senders that the recipient is driving.

Promising Practices

The No. 1 responsibility of law enforcement leaders is ensuring the safety of their officers. The NYSP's lessons learned can be broadly applied to law enforcement agencies seeking ways to reinforce officer safety through distraction reduction:

- Law enforcement agencies must recognize that distracted driving is a serious threat to personnel and establish clear policies to minimize unnecessary dangers posed by smartphones and texting.
- Because people are less likely to practice unsafe behaviors when they're aware of the risks they pose, regular officer training and education—including reminders to officers before, during, and after patrol—can reduce the likelihood of distracted driving.
- It's important to examine the patrol vehicle environment and minimize distractions where possible.

Training, Research, and Education for Driving Safety (TREDS)

Case Example: Washington Traffic Safety Commission

More than 450 people die every year in fatal crashes on Washington State roadways. Because distracted driving was identified as a factor in 30 percent of those crashes in Washington State,¹⁶ the Washington Traffic Safety Commission (WTSC) has taken practical and innovative approaches to reduce it.

Its efforts began with the law. Prior to 2017, Washington State's distracted driving law prohibited drivers in moving vehicles from talking on the phone if they were holding the phone to their ear. The law also prohibited drivers from texting while driving, but did not explicitly state whether the driver could email, access the internet, or use other electronic devices. Recognizing that this law was lacking, Washington State in 2017 passed a new distracted driving law—the Driving Under the Influence of Electronics (E-DUI) Act—that makes it illegal for drivers to use handheld electronic devices, including cell phones, tablets, laptops, and video games, while driving. It even bans the use of mobile devices by drivers at stop signs.¹⁷

With the enactment of this new law—which does not apply to emergency responders—came a six-month educational period to inform drivers of the changes. During the first 12 months, law enforcement issued 27,822 cell phone citations, including 784 citations for “dangerously distracted” driving.¹⁸

Despite successful enforcement efforts, a troubling trend quickly emerged in the comments sections of educational posts on social media: The public noticed that law enforcement officers were as distracted by electronic equipment in their vehicles as motorists. Many, for instance, recalled seeing officers drive while using their phones and laptops. But that's just the beginning. Because the inside of a modern patrol vehicle resembles a cockpit—and because officers spend approximately 70 percent of their shift time inside that cockpit—potential distractions are numerous, ranging from mobile data computers (MDCs) and camera systems to radios and license plate readers, plus much more. These resources demand officers' constant attention, even as they're focused on other job-related tasks.

In order to address the issue of officer distraction, the WTSC connected with the Training, Research, and Education for Driving Safety (TREDS) program at the University of California, San Diego, to implement the *Distraction Overload* training model that was first adopted by the California Highway Patrol. The WTSC then hosted a multijurisdictional TREDS training on officer distraction that was attended by 44 officers representing 21 law enforcement agencies.

16 Washington Traffic Safety Commission, “Distracted Driving.”

17 Using a Personal Electronic Device While Driving, RCW 46.61.672 (2017).

18 Darrin T. Grondel, “Tackling Distracted Driving in Washington State,” *Traffic Safety Initiatives*, Police Chief 85, no. 11 (2018): 20–21.

Attendees came from a variety of agency types, including municipal, county, state, and federal agencies.

TREDS staff shared the full training presentation ahead of time with highlighted slides that would need to be customized with state-specific data and information. This gave the WTSC the opportunity to gather needed information and add other material it felt participants needed to see.

During the program, officers:

- Learned practical strategies to reduce distracted driving;
- Developed awareness about behaviors that can make them lose focus while driving;
- Studied crash risks from distraction and fatigue;
- Weighed potential benefits of officer exemption from distracted driving laws against the risk of potential civil liability;
- Received Below 100 training;¹⁹ and
- Made a pledge to stop driving while distracted.

The training also included a pre- and post-course survey. Before the class, over half (57.5 percent) of participants said they used their cell phone during non-emergency driving patrols. After the course, however, nearly all participants said they were more aware of the risks associated with using phones while driving.

Promising Practices

The WTSC continues to take a proactive approach to reducing distracted driving amongst officers in law enforcement agencies across Washington State by holding more TREDS *Distraction Overload* trainings. Based on the trainings' success, several best practices have emerged for other law enforcement agencies:

- Community engagement through social media and other means can alert law enforcement agencies to distracted driving issues and challenges in both the police force and the community at large.
- Law enforcement officers must personally observe and role model distracted driving laws in order to enforce them effectively.
- Explicit training and education can increase awareness of distracted driving behaviors amongst law enforcement officers, who are especially prone to distracted driving because of technology in their patrol cars.²⁰

¹⁹ Below 100, www.below100.org.

²⁰ Darrin Grondel, "Distraction Overload: Risk Reduction for First Responders," Lifesavers Conference presentation (Louisville, KY: April 1, 2019).

DISTRACTED DRIVING RESOURCE LIST

IACP Resources

- Highway Safety Committee
www.theiacp.org/working-group/committee/highway-safety-committee
- IACP Resolutions
www.theiacp.org/resources/resolution/iacp-resolutions
- Traffic Safety Initiatives
www.theiacp.org/projects/traffic-safety
- Traffic Safety Resource Page
www.theiacp.org/resources/traffic-safety-resource-page

Police Chief Magazine

- Distracted Driving: Promising Solutions from the field
www.policechiefmagazine.org/traffic-safety-initiatives-distracted-driving-promising-solutions/?ref=b115b1a0c7e48f854b01fc7ddc6a91cc
- One Town's Approach to Combatting Distracted Driving: Oro Valley Goes Hands-Free
www.policechiefmagazine.org/traffic-safety-initiatives-one-town-approach-to-combating-distracted-driving/?ref=b72fde884ffd5073601527eae171992
- Tackling Distracted Driving in Washington State
www.policechiefmagazine.org/tsi-tackling-distracted-driving-washington-state/?ref=e07bc0743ca52734d8146d971eeaf996
- The War on Distracted Driving: How One Suburban Police Department Has Prepared for Battle
www.policechiefmagazine.org/the-war-on-distracted-driving-how-one-suburban-police-department-has-prepared-for-battle/?ref=e0154817ccbee33a165f30055d7e9fb2

Federal Resources

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

- “Evaluation of NHTSA Distracted Driving High-Visibility Enforcement Demonstration Projects in California and Delaware”
www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.dot.gov/files/documents/812108_evaluationdistracteddrivingca-de.pdf
- Evaluation of NHTSA Distracted Driving Demonstration Projects in Connecticut and New York
www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.dot.gov/files/811635_eval_nhtsa_distracted_driving_demo_proj_comm_ct_and_ny.pdf
- Four High-Visibility Enforcement Demonstration Waves in Connecticut and New York Reduce Hand-Held Phone Use
www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.dot.gov/files/811845_hve_demonstration_waves_in_cn_ny_tsf-rn-july2011.pdf
- “Investigation and Prosecution of Distracted Driving Cases”
www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.dot.gov/files/documents/812407-distracteddrivingreport.pdf
- Products for Enforcement Action (PEAK) Kit
www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov/get-materials/distracted-driving/u-drive-u-text-u-pay/peak-enforcement-kit
- USDOT Summary of Statistical Findings, Distracted Driving 2016 Research Note
<https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812517>
- USDOT Transportation Safety Institute, Distracted Driving Enforcement Strategies
https://tsi-dot.csod.com/LMS/LoDetails/DetailsLo.aspx?loid=b2a87b9d-a4b3-4c5d-8c77-a85f5945b3bd&query=%3Fs%3D1%26q%3D&back_key=1#t=3
- NHTSA Traffic Safety Marketing
www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov/get-materials/distracted-driving
- Teen Driving
<https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/teen-driving>
- NHTSA Distracted Driving
<https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/distracted-driving>
- NHTSA/TSI training Course: Enforcing Distracted Driving Laws
<https://www.transportation.gov/tsi/highway-traffic-safety>
- Countermeasures That Work
https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.dot.gov/files/documents/812478_countermeasures-that-work-a-highway-safety-countermeasures-guide-.pdf

Advocacy Organization Resources

DRIVE SMART Virginia

- Distracted Driving Awareness Month Toolkit
www.drivesmartva.org/outreach-and-education/toolkits/

Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA)

- Distracted Driving Laws by State
www.ghsa.org/state-laws/issues/distracted%20driving

Impact Teen Drivers

- Impact Teen Drivers Resources
www.impactteendrivers.org/resource

National Safety Council (NSC)

- Distracted Driving Survivors Network
www.nsc.org/road-safety/get-involved/survivors-network
- Road to Zero Coalition
www.nsc.org/road-safety/get-involved/road-to-zero

StopDistractions.org

- www.StopDistractions.org

Additional Resources

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety

- Crash Risk of Cell Phone Use While Driving
<https://aaafoundation.org/crash-risk-cell-phone-use-driving-case-crossover-analysis-naturalistic-driving-data/>

Training, Research, and Education for Driving Safety - University of California, San Diego

- Distracted Driving
<http://treds.ucsd.edu/distracted-driving/>

Travelers Institute

- Every Second MattersSM
www.travelers.com/iw-documents/travelers-institute/esm-conversation-starter.pdf

RESOLUTIONS

Community Support for Traffic Safety

Submitted by: Highway Safety Committee

HSC.010.t2017

WHEREAS, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) recognizes the need for law enforcement on a national level to promote transparency between law enforcement and the communities they serve; and

WHEREAS, daily, law enforcement executives must prioritize competing demands for police services and the scope of these demands continues to expand while operating costs increase and available resources diminish; and

WHEREAS, this conflict between available resources and priorities has been detrimental to both traffic law enforcement and crime prevention; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, 35,092 persons lost their lives in fatal traffic crashes in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the most successful traffic safety and crime reduction strategies incorporate community education; external partnerships and narrowly focused law enforcement action in those locations which data analysis reveals as primary traffic crash and crime attractors; and

WHEREAS, the IACP recognizes the need for law enforcement to partner with their governing bodies and/or legislature to educate the community that high visibility traffic law enforcement efforts also have a positive effect on overall crime reduction, thereby reducing social harm and improving the quality of life in all areas; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the IACP calls upon state and local law enforcement to use a comprehensive and collaborative communication approach, with aggressive public education messaging through social media outlets, television, radio, and other media means to both educate and inform the community at large that high visibility traffic law enforcement initiatives are designed and implemented to save lives and reduce injuries from traffic crashes, as well as reduce crime, and do not include revenue generation as a primary purpose.



Support for Continued Development of Technology to Reduce Distracted Driving

Submitted by: Highway Safety Committee

Adopted at the 124th IACP Annual Conference in October 2017

WHEREAS, in 2015, according to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration: 3,477 people were killed, and 391,000 were injured in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers, and

WHEREAS, many States currently have laws against text messaging, talking on a cell phone, and other distractions while driving, yet the number of distracted driving related fatalities and injuries continues to increase, and

WHEREAS, technology now exists to prevent the use of a driver's cell phone while a vehicle is in motion, and

WHEREAS, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) recognizes the need to reduce distracted driving and its associated fatalities and injuries to both first responders and the driving public, now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the IACP calls upon law enforcement officials; transportation officials, including State highway safety offices and highway safety advocacy groups, to strongly support and work in partnership with technology companies to continue both the development and adoption of technologies that reduce a driver's ability to operate a motor vehicle while distracted by cell phones and other portable electronic devices.

Urging Elected Officials to Work with Law Enforcement to Ensure that Proposed Legislation is Clear, Enforceable and Does Not Discourage and/or Impede Traffic Enforcement Efforts

Submitted by: Highway Safety Committee
HSC.11.t2018

WHEREAS, vehicle crashes are a leading cause of deaths, injuries, property damage and related costs to communities and its citizens; and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive traffic safety program has been proven to decrease vehicle crashes of all types, including vulnerable roadway users such as bicyclists and pedestrians, and also provides ancillary benefits to law enforcement and public safety; and

WHEREAS, high-visibility traffic enforcement is a key component of a comprehensive traffic safety program and enforcement must be conducted in compliance with legislation; and

WHEREAS, at times, and often in reaction to an incident, legislation is proposed that is unclear, unenforceable and/or would result in discouraging, impeding and/or creating confusion as to the intent of a particular law or laws; and

WHEREAS, such a scenario would have the potential to severely decrease traffic enforcement efforts which in turn would potentially increase crashes and thus endanger all roadway users . Now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the IACP strongly urges elected officials to work in concert with law enforcement officials prior to enacting traffic-related legislation (both new and amendments to existing laws) so that the intent of the legislation is clear, that it is enforceable and that it does not discourage and/or impede law enforcement personnel from conducting traffic enforcement efforts.

NOTES



44 Canal Center Plaza, Suite 200
Alexandria, VA 22314

703.836.6767 • FAX 703.836.4743 • www.theIACP.org

Distracted Driving Talking Points

Talking Points for Chiefs for Municipal Governments

- The number of road traffic deaths on the world's roads remains unacceptably high, at 1.35 million per year, according to the 2018 Global Status Report on Road Safety.¹
- In our community, **[insert number of fatalities]** people died last year in distraction-related crashes.
- Highly visible traffic enforcement helps reduce traffic injuries and fatalities.²
- Law enforcement supports clear and enforceable distracted driving legislation with consideration of law enforcement for input and allows law enforcement to conduct highly visible education and enforcement activities in order to save lives.³
- Law enforcement supports working with technology companies to continue to develop and adopt technologies that reduce distractions to drivers while they're in their vehicles.⁴

Talking Points for Chiefs for Community Education

- Every day, roughly nine people are killed and more than 1,000 injured in crashes involving distracted driving.⁵
- Distracted driving is any activity that takes your eyes off the road, hands off the wheel, or mind off driving. Personal grooming/checking yourself in the mirror, eating or drinking, attending to pets, and programming your gps navigation while driving, are just a few examples of possible distractions that can increase your risk of crashing.⁶
- When you get behind the wheel, be an example to your family and friends by turning on your "Do Not Disturb" or similar feature and putting your phone away. Using a cell phone while driving is a potentially deadly—and oftentimes illegal—activity that could kill you, a loved one, a friend, or a stranger.
- Speak up. If your friends text, or do other distracting behaviors while driving, ask them to stop. Listen to your passengers: If they ask you to stop using your phone while driving, do so.
- Designate a passenger as the "designated texter," granting them access to your phone to respond to calls or messages as needed.
- Cell phone use can be a habit that is hard to break. If you're struggling to refrain from texting and driving, put your cell phone in your glove box or back seat of your car until you arrive at your destination.
- As of September 2019, laws that ban drivers from using handheld cell phones while operating a motor vehicle exist in 20 states and the District of Columbia. Additionally, 48 states and the District of Columbia have laws prohibiting texting while driving; in all but three of those jurisdictions, laws are primary enforcement laws, meaning officers can cite drivers for using a handheld cell phone without any other traffic offense occurring.⁷

Sources:

- 1 World Health Organization (WHO), "Global Status Report on Road Safety 2018; 2018 (p. 3). https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_safety_status/2018/en/.
- 2 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, "HVE Enforcement," <https://one.nhtsa.gov/Driving-Safety/Enforcement-&-Justice-Services/HVE-enforcement>.
- 3 IACP, "Aggressive Traffic Enforcement," (October 2003), <https://www.theiacp.org/resources/resolution/aggressive-traffic-enforcement>
- 4 IACP, "Support for Continued Development of Technology to Reduce Distracted Driving," (December 2017), <https://www.theiacp.org/resources/resolution/support-for-continued-development-of-technology-to-reduce-distracted-driving>.
- 5 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, "Traffic Safety Facts Research Notes 2016: Distracted Driving," (2019, July 1). <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812517>
- 6 AAA Exchange, "The Risk of Distracted Driving," (2019, July 3). <https://exchange.aaa.com/safety/distracted-driving/the-risks-of-distracted-driving/#.XRzXlehKi7l>.
- 7 Governor's Highway Safety Association, "Distracted Driving," <https://www.ghsa.org/state-laws/issues/Distracted-Driving>.

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CONTACT: [Name, Phone Number, E-mail Address]

Note: Before filling in the names of the organization and organization spokesperson, you MUST contact them for permission to use their names in this press release. Also, you must get their approval for the language of their quotations, and any changes or additions they may require. Only after this is done should you issue the press release. This press release is meant to be used by agencies conducting distracted driving enforcement in accordance with their state and/or local laws.

Thanks to the prevalence of smartphones and other mobile devices, distracted driving is now one of the leading causes of vehicle crashes on U.S. roadways. Because of the lethal risks it poses, **[Law Enforcement Agency Name]** is encouraging drivers to avoid any and all distractions—including cell phones, food, or programming your gps navigation while driving—and focus, instead, on driving. To raise awareness about the dangers distracted driving poses, officers will be conducting a high-visibility education and enforcement campaign from **[insert campaign dates and peak enforcement times]**, the goal of which is saving lives with stepped up enforcement efforts that catch distracted drivers and enforce distracted driving laws.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 3,166 people died in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers in 2017.¹ An analysis by the AAA Foundation, meanwhile, found that while more than 80 percent of drivers believed it was completely unacceptable for a motorist to text behind the wheel, more than a third of those same drivers admitted to reading text messages while operating a motor vehicle.² Clearly, there is more work to be done to prevent injuries and fatalities related to distracted driving.

“It seems that every day, you can look out of your car’s window and see a driver using their cell phone, eating and drinking, personal grooming, or attending to a pet,”³ said **[insert Law Enforcement Agency Representative name]**. “Distracted driving has caused **[insert local distracted driving-related injury/fatality numbers]** in our community. Any non-driving activity that you engage in while driving can pose as a distraction and increase your risk of being involved in a crash. If your attention is anywhere other than on the road, you’re driving distracted—and you’re driving dangerously. Do the right thing and give your undivided attention to driving. You may just save someone’s life.

Violating **[insert state]**’s distracted driving laws can be costly, with fines up to **[insert maximum fine amount]**.

[Insert Law Enforcement Agency] encourages you to focus on driving and remove any and all distractions when you get behind the wheel. If you need to do something distracting, follow these steps for a safe driving experience:

- Make sure your car is parked before utilizing your cell phone.
- If you are expecting a text message or need to send one, pull over and park your car in a safe location. Once you are safely off the road and parked, it is safe to text.
- Enlist a passenger’s help to assist you in driving safely. Allow them to access your phone to respond to calls or messages, change the radio, and secure any loose items while driving.

- Do not engage in social media, scrolling, or messaging while driving. Cell phone use can be habit-forming. Struggling to not text and drive? Put the cell phone in the glove box or back seat of your vehicle until you arrive at your destination. Another option is to put the cell phone in “do not disturb” mode while driving or download a safe driving app, both of which will block incoming notifications from messages or calls while you’re driving.
- Leave a pet at home or secure them before driving so that they don’t roam freely. Reaching in the back seat to attend to them, or having them climb on your lap, can cause a distraction.
- Review maps or input your route into your navigation system and adjust your side and rearview mirrors before beginning to drive.⁴

For more distracted driving resources, visit www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov and www.theiacp.org.

Sources:

- 1 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration,(2019), “Distracted Driving in Fatal Crashes, 2017.” (Traffic Safety Facts Research Note. Report No. DOT HS 812700. (Washington, DC: April 2019) <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812700>
- 2 AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety (2018). 2017 Traffic Safety Culture Index. *AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety*. <https://aaafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/AAAFTS-TSCI-Fact-Sheet.pdf>.
- 3 AAA Exchange, “The Risk of Distracted Driving,” (2019, July 3). <https://exchange.aaa.com/safety/distracted-driving/the-risks-of-distracted-driving/#.XRzXlehKi7l>.
- 4 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, “Distractions: In and Out of the Vehicle,” (2019, July 11), <https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.dot.gov/files/documents/driverdistractions.pdf>

The Dangers of Distracted Driving



Civilians and law enforcement officers alike engage in distracted driving. Trying to multitask while driving is dangerous. Any non-driving activity that you engage in can cause potential distractions including eating and drinking, personal grooming, attending to a pet, or programming your gps while driving. Distracted driving kills roughly nine people every day, and more than 1,000 are injured in crashes involving distracted driving.¹

Myth: Multi-tasking

Human brains cannot handle more than one task at a time.



The brain goes through a specific process to deal with the information it is constantly taking in.²

>50%

Information in driving environment missed by drivers using cell phones.³

Economic Impact

■ **\$40 billion**—estimated cost of distracted driving-related fatalities.¹¹

■ **\$4.2 billion**—estimated societal harm costs due to distracted driving.¹²

Numbers to Know

■ **2x**—Texting or dialing while driving doubles the incidence of crash involvement for experienced drivers.⁴

■ **8x**—Texting or dialing a cell phone drastically increase the incidents of crash involvement for novice drivers.⁵

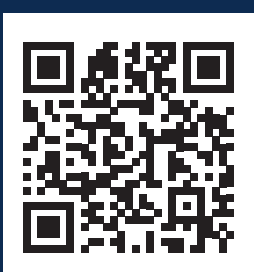
■ **36%**—Crashes that could be avoided if driver distraction was not a factor.⁶

■ **9%**—Drivers at any point during the day who use their cell phones while driving.⁷

■ **40%**—Drivers who have almost been in a crash because they were distracted.⁸

■ **120 feet**—The distance required for a car to stop at 40 mph. A fraction delay can increase this distance by several car lengths.⁹

■ **32**—Counties, as of 2019, have passed laws banning cell phone use while driving and Portugal banned the use of cell phones, hand-held and hands-free, while driving.¹⁰



Footnotes can be found at www.theiacp.org/DDtoolkit/footnotes



The Dangers of Distracted Driving by Law Enforcement Officers



Mobile display terminal

Mounted radar



Interior Lights

Microphone for outer speaker



Quick access button to the siren and horn



AM/FM radio



Laptop



Body worn camera



Radar remote control



Citation printer



Cell phones (personal and agency)

Siren/horn control pad



Multi-channel radio



Coffee



Duty bag in front seat

Meal bag



On average, it takes **five seconds to send or read a text message**. When going 55 mph with your eyes focused on your phone, during that time, a car can travel the length of a football field.¹

It takes **roughly 3/4 second to react to a perceived threat and an additional 3/4 second to act**; moving foot to break pedal. To slowdown from 55 mph, **it can take about 1.5 seconds or 4.5 seconds for your car to come to a complete stop**. Doubling your speed quadruples your stopping distance.⁴

Data retrieved from the Officer Down Memorial website; from 2016 through 2018, roughly **34 officers died in single-vehicle collisions on the roadway**.²

**This number includes vehicles that left the roadway or collided with an object as well as those that died due to injuries sustained due to the crash.*

People are **distracted up to 27 seconds** after they finish sending a voice text.⁵

The brain is not able to process two things at one time. While driving, the brain will switch between driving and the distraction, slowing down the reaction time.³

Footnotes can be found at www.theiacp.org/DDtoolkit/footnotes

