



# Distracted Driving

# What is Distracted Driving?

Distracted driving is any activity that takes attention away from the task of safe driving.

Three main types:

- **Visual**-taking your eyes off the road ahead
- **Manual**-taking your hands off the wheel
- **Cognitive**-taking your mind off what you are doing<sup>1</sup>

What are some examples of distracted driving?



# Potential Distractions

Examples include:

- Texting
- Eating or drinking
- Adjusting navigation system, radio/playlist
- Adjusting vehicle controls
- Other vehicle occupants
- Being pre-occupied with personal or work related issues
- Reaching for objects

# Know the Facts

- Nine percent of fatal crashes in 2017 were reported as distraction-affected crashes.<sup>2</sup>
- Each day in the United States, about 9 people are killed and more than 1,000 are injured in crashes reported to involve a distracted driver.<sup>3</sup>
- In 2017, there were over 3,400 people killed in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers.<sup>2</sup>
- Drivers under the age of 20 have the highest proportion of distraction-related crashes.<sup>3</sup>
- Recent research has shown that distraction was a factor in nearly 60% of teen crashes, including 89% of road-departure crashes and 76% of rear-end crashes.<sup>4</sup>

# Know the Facts

- The most common forms of distraction leading to teen driver crashes include:
  - Interacting with one or more passengers (15%)
  - Using a cell phone (12%)
  - Looking at something in vehicle (10%)
  - Looking at something outside the vehicle (9%)
  - Singing/dancing to music (8%)
  - Grooming (6%)
  - Reaching for an object<sup>4</sup>



# New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee: Preventing Distracted Driving Public Service Announcement



# Potential Consequences of Distracted Driving

- Inability to avoid crashing with stopped vehicles
- Not maintaining proper lane position
- Delayed decision making
- Reduced situational awareness
- Inability to execute emergency maneuvers
- Inability to recognize and obey traffic signals



# Distractions PSA





# Class Discussion

- What are some distractions shown in the video?
- What are some steps you can take to avoid distractions as a driver?
- What are some steps you can take to avoid distractions as a pedestrian?

# Cell Phones

- Research shows that cell phone use of any kind degrades a driver's performance. Hands free use is not risk free. <sup>1</sup>
- Drivers should make every effort to move to a safe place off the road before using a cell phone. <sup>1</sup>
- Phone conversation versus conversation with someone in the car.





# **Impact of Distracted Driving Video**

# Discussion

- How did this video make you feel?
- Do you know anyone this has happened to?
- Could this happen to you or someone else?



# **How is the SIPDE Process Affected by Distractions?**

# How Does Texting Affect Searching

- If you are texting, you might not notice vehicles stopping or turning in front of you, increasing the likelihood you may crash.



# How Does Texting Affect Evaluating

- If the brain is focusing on anything other than driving, it can make it difficult to react appropriately during a potential crash, especially for less experienced drivers.<sup>7</sup>

# How Texting Affects Executing

- Failure to properly execute the driving maneuver selected in the evaluate step.
- When texting, at least one hand is off the steering wheel and on the phone instead; additionally, eyes are off the road.
- Failure to brake or accelerate at the right time or to the right degree.



# Consequences of Distracted Driving Learning Activity

Imagine you are driving with a friend who is driving while distracted. Think about what might happen to the driver, the passenger(s) or to others if the driver continues to drive distracted. Think about two possible outcomes for each group. Be prepared to discuss with the class.

# Audio and Navigation Technology

- Examples: Radio, CD player, Bluetooth Technology





# Discussion

- What are some benefits of having audio/navigation systems in vehicles?
- What potential distractions do they present?

# Audio and Navigation Technology: Potential Benefits and Distractions

- **Potential Benefits**- access to music; updated travel and weather information
- **Potential Distractions**- adjusting controls takes hand off wheel, looking at map, audio content itself can also be a distraction



# Passengers

- Peer passengers can be an especially dangerous distraction for teen drivers.
- Two or more peer passengers more than triples this risk of a fatal crash with a teen behind the wheel.<sup>7</sup> This is the reason behind the passenger restrictions in graduated driver licensing systems.

What are some ways a passenger can distract a driver?

# Potential Distractions Outside the Vehicle

- What things outside the vehicle could present a distraction?

# Potential Distractions Outside the Vehicle

- Crash scenes
- Road construction or work zones
- People, places or things of interest along the roadside<sup>6</sup>



# Preventing Distractions Before Driving

- Think about potential distractions that might occur in the vehicle before driving.
- Develop a plan to reduce/eliminate distractions.
- Expect distractions to occur and determine how to best address.





# Managing Driver Distraction

- Turn off or stow devices before leaving. If you need to use your cell phone, pull over in a safe area;
- Ensure you are familiar with your vehicle's features and equipment, before you get behind the wheel;
- Make adjustments to vehicle controls before beginning the drive. Take advantage of normal stops to adjust controls if necessary or ask a passenger to adjust controls;
- Properly secure all loose items in vehicle (personal items, pets, etc.);
- Eat before driving or leave early to allow for time to stop and eat;
- Do your personal grooming at home;
- Avoid arguments and stressful or emotional conversations with passengers that may distract your attention from the road;
- Stay focused, pay attention, and expect the unexpected.<sup>6</sup>

# Drivers' Responsibility While Driving

- Be aware of potential distractions and proactively identify strategies to manage them.
- 5 point violation for texting and/or cell phone use while driving.
- You are responsible for operating your vehicle safely— take ownership of your behavior.

# Distracted Driving Prevention

- Lead by example and never drive distracted. Be an example for others and if you need to text or talk on the phone, pull over to a safe place.
- Speak up if you see a friend or family member driving while distracted.
- Have everyone in your family (including parents) sign a pledge to commit to driving distraction free.

# Recap and Review:

- Definition and potential consequences of distracted driving
- Distractions inside the vehicle
- Distractions outside the vehicle
- Strategies for managing driver distraction
- Spreading the word on the dangers of distracted driving

# Concluding Thoughts Discussion

- What might happen to the driver, to the passenger, or to others if they continue to allow the driver to be distracted while driving?
- What is your role as the driver in preventing distracted driving?
- What is your role as the passenger in preventing distracted driving?

# References

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2. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Distracted Driving in Fatal Crashes, April 2019. <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812700>
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