



# PREVENTION MATTERS

THE CENTER FOR INJURY PREVENTION AND POLICY

## Distracted Driving Prevention

Each day in the United States, about 9 people are killed and more than 1,000 people are injured in crashes due to distracted driving.

Distracted driving is any activity that takes your attention off of driving. Many people think they are good at doing more than one thing at a time, or 'multitasking.' In reality, our brain does not 'multitask' – it 'switches' between tasks. If your brain is more focused on one task, there is less brainpower to devote to other tasks.



There are many sources of distraction while driving, but cell phones are one of the top distractions because so many drivers are using them for long periods during the day. Even hands-free use of cell phones is distracting because it can cause "inattention blindness," where your brain is not processing, responding to, or monitoring your surroundings appropriately. National Safety Council (NSC) studies show that drivers using hands-free devices are **still** less likely to notice exits, red lights, stop signs and other important cues.

### Other forms of distraction include:

- Eating and drinking
- Talking to passengers
- Reaching for items
- Carrying out personal hygiene
- Interacting with the car's entertainment or navigation system (even hands-free)

### According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, in 2016:

- 37,461 lives were lost on U.S. roads
- 3,470 of those deaths were due to distracted driving

### Facts about Cell Phone Use While Driving

- A University of Utah study showed that people who talked on a cell phone while driving performed at a level similar to a blood-alcohol content of 0.08% (legally impaired)
- Text messaging increases the risk of crash or near-crash by 23 times
- Sending or receiving an average text message takes your eyes off the road the same time it takes to travel the length of a football field (at 55 mph)

### Public Attitudes about Distracted Driving

A 2016 Survey by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found that drivers age 19-24 were:

- More likely to report reading or typing text messages while driving
- More likely to find texting while driving acceptable
- Less likely to support legislation aimed at curbing distractions

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety also reported 58% of teens involved in crashes were distracted.

 People "know" cell phone use while driving is dangerous, but they still do it!

More than **84%** of drivers acknowledge that cell phone distractions are dangerous and "unacceptable," but more than one-third of these same drivers admit that they read or sent a text message or email while driving in the past month.

### RESOURCES

Towards Zero Deaths: [TowardZeroDeathsMD.com](http://TowardZeroDeathsMD.com)

Teen Safe Driving Coalition: [TeenSafeDriving.org/MD](http://TeenSafeDriving.org/MD)

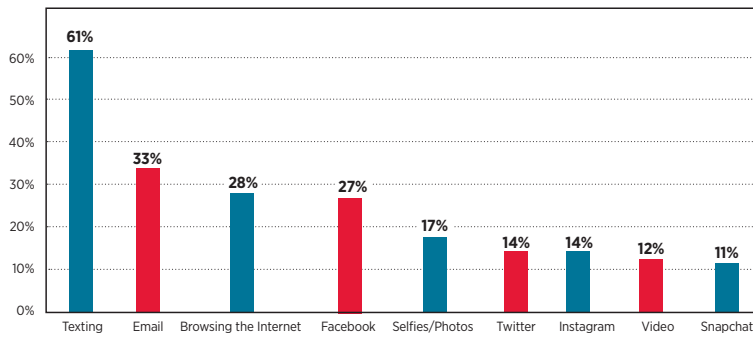
### FOR MORE INFORMATION ON

Center for Injury Prevention and Policy visit [umm.edu/CIPP](http://umm.edu/CIPP)

STC Prevention Matters visit [umm.edu/PreventionMatters](http://umm.edu/PreventionMatters)

For details on how to request a presentation on distracted or impaired driving, visit [umm.edu/Prevention](http://umm.edu/Prevention) or email us at [prevention@umm.edu](mailto:prevention@umm.edu).

## Smartphone activities people say they do while driving:



**62%** keep their smartphones within easy reach while driving.

**30%** of people who post to Twitter while driving report doing it “all the time.”

**22%** who access social networks while driving cite addiction as a reason.

Of those who shoot videos behind the wheel, 27% think they can do it safely while driving.

Source: ItCanWait.com

## Cell Phone Use While Driving Causes 4 Types of Distractions

1. Visual: Your eyes are focused away from the road.
2. Manual: Your hands are moving away from the steering wheel.
3. Cognitive: Your mind wanders away from the driving task.
4. Auditory: You are focused on listening to something and this takes your mind off driving.



University of Maryland Medical Center  
 UMMC Midtown Campus  
 UM Baltimore Washington Medical Center  
 UM Capital Region Health  
 UM Charles Regional Medical Center  
 UM Rehabilitation & Orthopaedic Institute  
 UM St. Joseph Medical Center  
 UM Shore Regional Health  
 UM Upper Chesapeake Health  
 Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital



## What Can Each One of Us Do to Prevent Distracted Driving?

1. Devote your full attention to driving.
2. Store items securely in the car so they cannot roll around and tempt you to reach for them.
3. Make all adjustments (GPS, seats, mirrors, climate control and temperature systems) before you start driving.
4. Finish dressing and personal grooming before you start driving.
5. Turn your cell phone off or into “silent” mode before you start driving.
6. Put your cell phone out of reach (place in the trunk or glovebox).
7. Download an app that prevents you from texting while driving.
8. Use your cell phone for emergency situations only.
9. Avoid eating while driving.
10. Limit the number of passengers, as well as the level of activity inside your car.
11. Avoid thinking about stressful things or having serious conversations while driving. Save it for later.
12. If something else demands your attention while driving, pull over to a safe place and deal with it.



## Get the Message

In 2011, the R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center, the Maryland Institute of Emergency Medical Services, the Maryland Committee on Trauma, the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration, and the Maryland State Police partnered to produce a video that is now shown in drivers' education classes throughout the state. It is titled “Get the Message” and highlights the dangers of distracted driving to people of all ages.

In the video, *Kate* is texting while driving and is killed on impact. Her friend, a passenger in the vehicle, suffers a traumatic injury and, as a result, is permanently disfigured from the crash.

## Trauma Prevention Assemblies

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|----------------------|--|
| <b>Presentation:</b> | Dangers of Distracted/Impaired Driving<br>Societal and Legal Consequences of Distracted/Impaired Driving |
| <b>Video:</b>        | “Get the Message”  |
| <b>Testimony:</b>    | Trauma Survivor's story  |
| <b>Debriefing:</b>   | How to be a safe driver and a safe passenger   |

SEE RESOURCES ON OTHER SIDE >>