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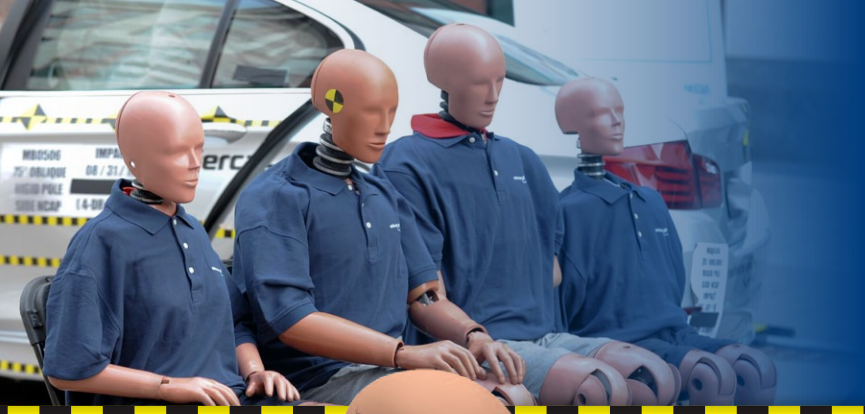
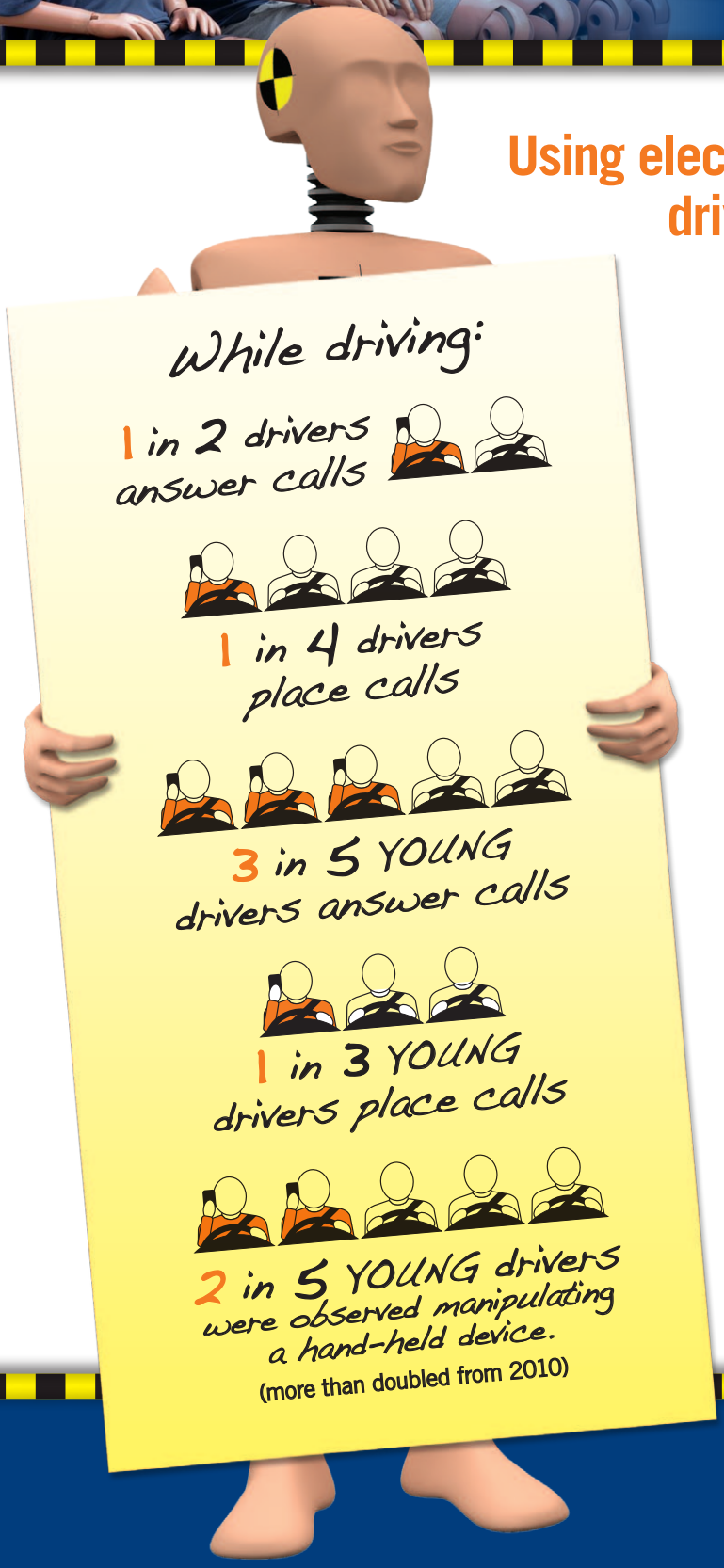
SAFETY IN NUMBERS





Using electronic devices while driving is a serious safety problem

Most drivers know that texting while driving is a dangerous behavior, but many still use their cell phones and other mobile devices when they are behind the wheel, putting themselves and others at risk. Many drivers see distracted driving* as risky when *other drivers* do it, but do not recognize how their own driving deteriorates.

Almost half (48.6%) of drivers say they answer incoming phone calls, and 1 of 4 drivers (23.9%) are willing to place calls on all, most, or some trips. About half (48.5%) said they never place calls while driving. Considering there are more than 210 million licensed drivers in America,[1] slightly more than 102 million drivers were answering calls and 50 million drivers were placing calls while driving in 2012. At any given daylight moment across America, there are about 660,000 drivers using cell phones or manipulating electronic devices while driving.[2]

*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.

For more information on distracted driving visit:

DISTRACTION.GOV

U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

NHTSA
www.nhtsa.gov

THE PROBLEM

Texting while driving involves all 3 major types of distraction

VISUAL

Taking your eyes off the road

MANUAL

Taking your hands off the wheel

COGNITIVE

Taking your mind off driving

What Data Tells Us

- At this very moment, there are some 660,000 drivers talking on hand-held cell phones – 5% of all American drivers at any given typical daylight moment. www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811718.pdf
- Almost double that number – 1.18 million drivers (9%) – were using some type of mobile device (either hand-held or hands-free) at a typical daylight moment.
- Use of an electronic device while driving can distract drivers from appropriately thinking about the driving task, watching the road and surrounding environment, and keeping their hands on the steering wheel. Texting while driving, a common activity in today's world, involves all three types of distraction – visual, manual, and cognitive. (www.Distraction.gov)
- Accurate reporting of distracted driving in fatal crashes poses a challenge for police officers who prepare crash reports after the incident. The highway safety community is working to create uniform reporting guidelines for distracted driving and to train officers to use them. In 2011, 7% of the drivers in fatal crashes were reported as distracted at the time of the crashes, and of these, 12% were using cell phones. More than half the drivers in fatal crashes using cell phones were 15 to 29 years old. Almost 1 in 6 (17%) injury crashes involved distraction, resulting in 387,000 injured people in 2011. Cell phone use was reported in an estimated 21,000 distraction-affected crashes **(www.Distraction.gov).**

What People Tell Us

- Almost half (48%) of drivers say they answer their cell phones while driving at least some of the time, and more than half of those (58%) continue to drive after answering the call. This has not changed in the past two years. (www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/traffic_tech/tt407.pdf)
- Fewer drivers (14%) say they send text messages or e-mails, but about one-third of those (35%) continue to drive when sending text messages.
- Drivers of all ages use their phones while they are driving at least sometimes. More drivers recognize the risk and say they do not make or place calls or messages while driving than in 2010.
- Most drivers support bans on hand-held cell phone use (74%) and texting while driving (94%), and they approve fines of $200 or higher for talking on cell phones or texting while driving.

Crashes

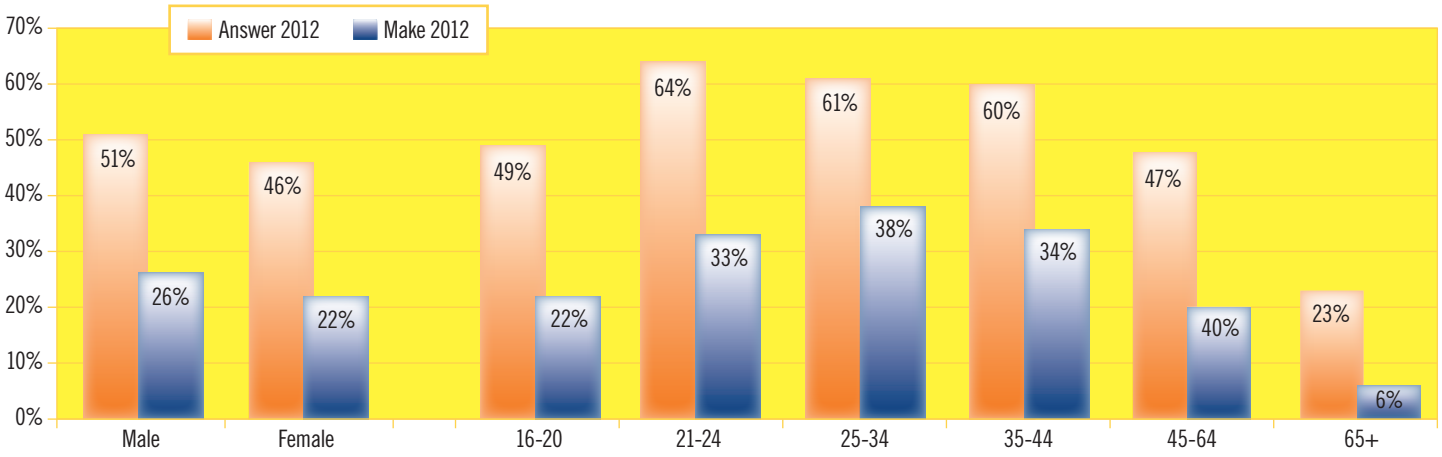
- Some 6% of drivers say they were involved in a crash and 7% were in a near-crash situation in the past year. Of those, 2% say they were using cell phones at the time, and 3% were sending or reading text messages. These percentages remain unchanged from 2010 to 2012.

It's the other driver's fault

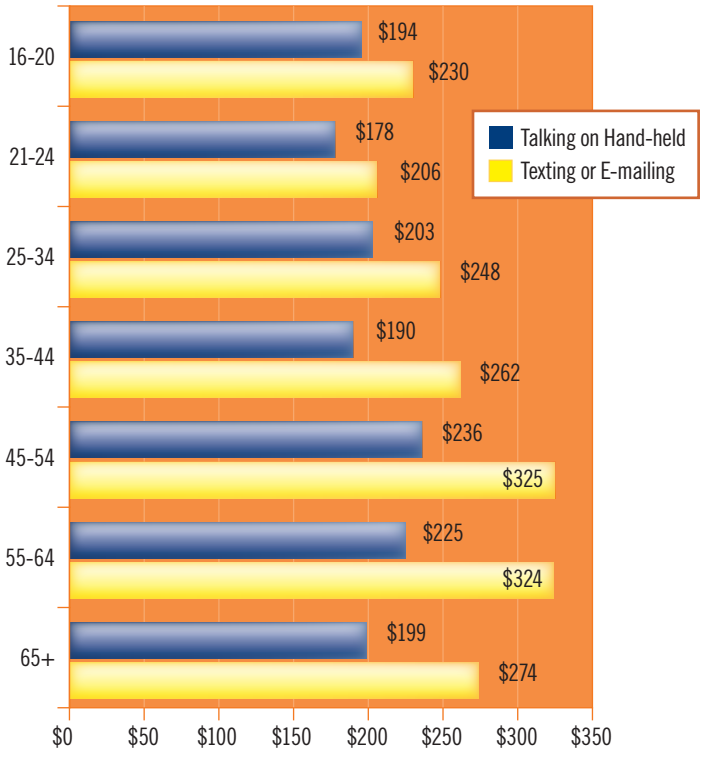
- As passengers, almost all motorists considered a driver who was sending or reading a text message while driving as very unsafe. Two of 5 passengers (40%) said they would be likely to say something if their driver was talking on a hand-held cell phone, and three-quarters (76%) would say something if their driver was texting. Young drivers are less likely to speak up.

THE FACTS

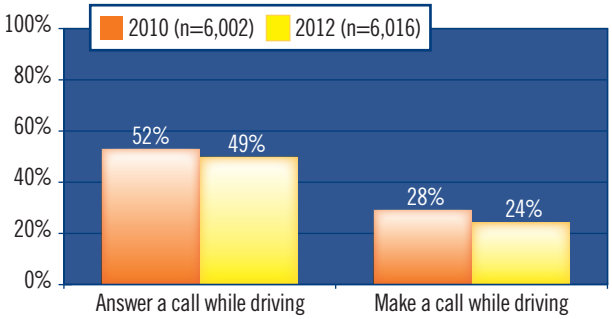
Percent Answering and Making Phone Calls While Driving, by Sex and Age (All, Most, or Some Trips) 2012.



What Should the Fine Be For Cell-Phone-Related Infractions by Age?
2012 NHTSA Distracted Driving Telephone Survey.



Answering a Call and Making a Call While Driving – Always, Almost Always, and Sometimes.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

We know what works

NHTSA's *Countermeasures That Work* recommends effective actions that communities can take to reduce distracted driving. http://ntl.bts.gov/lib/46000/46600/46662/811444.pdf

States and communities can

- Enforce strong laws banning texting and hand-held cell phone use to let drivers know distracted driving is a serious safety matter.
- Conduct high-visibility enforcement campaigns of existing texting and cell phone laws using NHTSA's *Phone in One Hand, Ticket in the Other* model. www.distraction.gov/download/research-pdf/508-research-note-dot-hs-811-845.pdf

- Publicize the results of enforcement campaigns.
- Work with partners such as advocacy groups, youth groups, schools, traffic safety agencies, law enforcement agencies, and public health agencies to continue the discussion on the dangers of distracted driving.
- Visit www.TrafficSafetyMarketing.gov for media material you can download.
- Go to www.distraction.gov for comprehensive information about distracted driving and see *Blueprint to end distracted driving*.

Employers can

- Adopt, publicize, and enforce company policies that prohibit employees from texting or talking on hand-held cell phones while in a company vehicle, or in a personal vehicle while using a company-issued cell phone.

You can

- Turn off electronic devices and put them out of reach before starting to drive.
- Speak up when you are a passenger and your driver uses an electronic device while driving. Offer to make the call for the driver, so his or her full attention stays on the driving task.
- Always wear your seat belt. Seat belts are the best defense against other unsafe drivers.

Parents can

- Be good role models for young drivers and set a good example. Talk with your teens about responsible driving.
- Make sure your community and State laws include electronic device bans in graduated driver licensing laws for young novice drivers, and make them part of your teen's driving responsibilities.

ONE TEXT OR CALL COULD WRECK IT ALL

References:

[1] FHWA. (2011, December). Highway Statistics 2010. Table DL-1C Washington, DC: Federal Highway Administration. Available at www.fhwa.dot.gov/policyinformation/statistics/2010/dl1c.cfm

[2] Pickrell, T. M., & Ye, T. J. (2011, December). Driver Electronic Device Use in 2010. (Traffic Safety Facts Research Note. Report No. DOT HS 811 517). Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Available at www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811517.pdf

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For more information on Distracted Driving visit:

DISTRACTION.GOV

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