

Talking Points for David Strickland

Distracted Driving Guidelines Release

Thank you, Secretary LaHood. And thank all of you for joining us this morning.

As you know, today the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is proposing new guidelines to curb distracted driving. We firmly believe that there are significant safety benefits to be gained by limiting and reducing driver distraction due to integrated electronic devices, including mobile phones.

I want to take a moment to put these new guidelines in context. NHTSA maintains a data-driven and research-oriented focus that touches on every aspect of driving safety. We envision a new safety era that will revolve around safe vehicle designs and emerging technologies. We expect crash avoidance technologies to provide an opportunity to save lives and reduce injuries by preventing crashes from occurring in the first place.

We also focus on driver behavior. Our data shows that the vast majority of crashes occur because of dangerous behavior, including driving drunk, driving while distracted, and driving too fast. We are working hard to harness technology to help mitigate the effects of these risky behaviors. The guidelines we are issuing today address the interface between electronic devices and driver distraction.

We recognize that vehicle manufacturers want to build vehicles that include the tools and conveniences expected by today's American drivers. The guidelines we are proposing would offer real-world guidance to automakers to help them develop electronic devices that provide features consumers want—without disrupting a driver's attention or sacrificing safety.

Let me give you a brief overview of NHTSA's Phase 1 guidelines, and then we would be happy to address your questions.

PHASE I

For Phase 1, we have set two goals that will enable manufacturers to ensure that their vehicle devices and systems do not interfere with the driver's focus and do not sacrifice safety by distracting the driver's attention.

The first goal is to reduce the complexity and the amount of time required to use electronic devices. We know that when a driver's focus shifts from the road to other activities within the vehicle that there can be serious safety consequences.

This goal essentially reduces drivers' distraction by setting four new limitations on electronic devices:

- Limit device operation to one hand only (leaving the other hand for steering)
- Limit the duration of off-road glances to no more than two seconds
- Limit unnecessary visual information in the driver's field of view
- Limit the amount of manual inputs required to operate the device

Our second goal is to disable operations of various in-vehicle electronic devices while driving, unless the devices are intended for passenger use and cannot be reasonably accessed or seen by the driver, or unless the vehicle is stopped and the transmission shift lever is in park. These include six visual-manual operations that are a significant source of driver distraction:

- Text messaging
- Internet browsing
- Social media browsing
- Navigation system destination entry by address
- 10-digit phone dialing
- Displaying to the driver more than 30 characters of text unrelated to the task of driving

Phase I guidelines were published in today's Federal Register. The public will have 60 days to comment. Final guidelines will be issued after the agency reviews and analyzes the public input.

We are happy to take your questions.

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Phase II and III notes, if needed.

PHASE II

Looking to the future, we are also developing Phase II proposed guidelines to address devices or systems that are brought into the vehicle, including personal electronic devices such as:

- Navigation systems
- Smart phones
- Electronic tablets and pads
- Other communications devices

PHASE III

A third set of proposed guidelines will address voice-activated controls to further minimize distraction in factory-installed, aftermarket, and portable devices.