

TOTALLY *Illogical*

For things that just don't make sense

TALKING LATE RADIO HAIR SIGNS
TEXTS MAKEUP SLEEP
CELL PHONES
LOST DIRECTIONS MUSIC
GPS
FOOD

DISTRACTED DRIVING

Not So Harmless:
*The Realities of
Distracted Driving*
Page 2

Time to Stop Driving
Distracted:
*Advocating can solve the
problem*
Page 2

Distracted Driving
Survey
Page 3

Tips & Tricks
Start driving safer today
Page 4

NOT SO HARMLESS: *The Realities of Distracted Driving*

Distracted driving is something that is considered the norm today. Drivers constantly check their phones for Facebook updates, text friends, or call loved-ones. But distracted driving is not only limited to the use of cell-phones—it involves any activity that averts the driver's attention from the road. This includes but is not limited to: putting on makeup or fixing hair, talking to others in the vehicle, eating or drinking, and changing the radio station.

It is so easy to lose focus of what one is doing because, as a driver, there are distractions everywhere.

Contrary to common belief, especially among teenagers, there really are consequences to distracted driving.

Over 300,000 accidents are caused by distracted driving in the United States each year
(Dallas).

It may become an unavoidable habit, but sooner or later there will be effects.

It is clear that distracted driving has become a national epidemic. From 2005 to 2008, the number of fatalities increased 28% from distracted driving (Wilson). Even more concerning is that approximately one in six fatal accidents in 2008 occurred from distracted driving (Wilson). Interestingly, two out of five people involved in a fatal accident caused by distracted driving in 2008 were younger drivers—under the age of thirty (Wilson).

Laws vary heavily by state, but growing technology is helping to increase laws effectiveness. "We know that distracted driving is dangerous, yet despite the diffusion of distracted driving laws, there is evidence that driver use of mobile devices is increasing," the study's lead author, Jennifer Ibrahim, an assistant professor of public health in the College of Health Professions and Social Work, said in a Temple University news release (Dallas).

As distracted driving continues to be an issue, new tactics will have to appear to combat this widespread problem and finally put an end to it.

TIME TO STOP DRIVING DISTRACTED:

Advocating can solve the problem

In 2010 alone, 3,267 people died in accidents involving distracted drivers. In 2011, that number increased to 3,331 ("Distracted Driving"). In addition, an estimated 387,000 people were injured in distracted driving related accidents in 2011 ("Texting and Cell Phone Use"). The increasing trend of distracted driving is becoming more prevalent in our society. Sadly, most of these accidents were completely avoidable.

Distracted driving can have extremely serious consequences, but most drivers try to deny the risks. Studies have shown that distracted driving is as dangerous as drunk driving ("Top 5 Reasons"). When a driver is not focused on the road, not only are they more likely to be in an accident, but also they are breaking the law. However, the sight of someone failing to drive safely is a daily occurrence.

A driver can quickly become preoccupied: visually, physically, or mentally ("Distracted Driving"). Distracted driving isn't limited to texting while driving; it also includes: eating, watching videos, using a navigation system, or even adjusting the radios. People's belief that they can multitask is one of the main problems of distracted driving. These seemingly simple tasks are easily overlooked as dangerous.

"Seventy percent of the study participants, all college undergraduates, said they thought they were better than average at multitasking. Of course, that's statistically impossible," (Shute).

To put an end to the problem, people need to completely understand the possible effects of distracted driving. Simply lecturing people, however, isn't working. What really needs to be done is to start advocating. Abstain from distracted driving and stop others from doing it. People follow their peers; even if only a small number of drivers stand up now, more will follow. Things as simple as turning off or muting the phone can keep a person from checking it while they drive. Everyone can do his or her part in stopping something that is so easily preventable.

DISTRACTED DRIVING IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

*A survey done by the staff of **TOTALLY** Illogical*

For the following survey, the number of cars and distracted drivers was counted on Hackmann Road, a street that sees a decent amount of traffic during the day, for approximately an hour. Anything deemed distracting was counted, including but not limited to: cell-phone use, eating, and interaction with others in the vehicle.

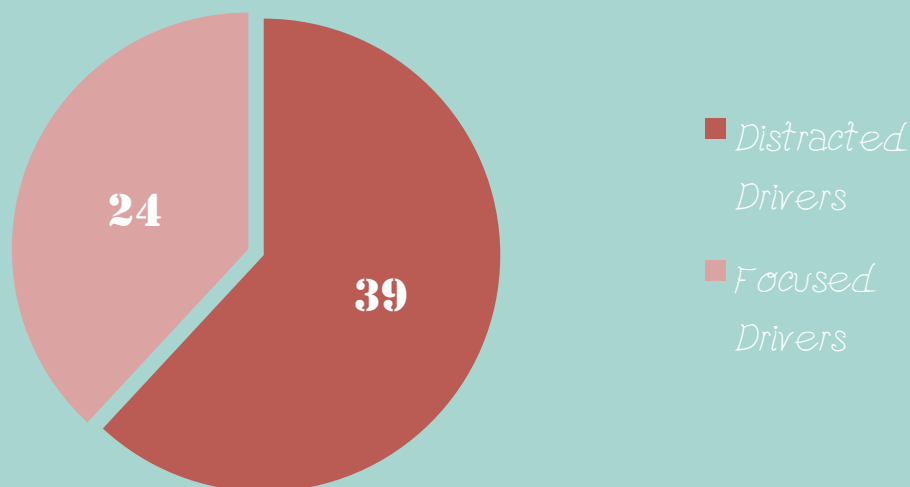
The results were astounding, especially because we did not realize how serious the problem of distracted driving was in our city. In the first ten minutes, thirteen drivers out of twenty-one cars were distracted. A total of 63 cars were counted, and 39 of them had a driver that was preoccupied in some way.

We were shocked by the results; driving requires a significant amount of focus. This also showed us that distracted driving is more than a statistic, and that's its happening in areas close to us all of the time.

While a drive down a local road seems fairly simple, there are always risks. A few pedestrians were seen crossing at an intersection not far away, and a distracted driver could have potentially hit them if they were going fast enough. Another cause of surprise was that there was a preschool, elementary school, and high school approximately a quarter mile away. The alarmingly high number of unfocused drivers could be a potential threat to a child or student.

It's never too late to start advocating against distracted driving, especially in your local area. It could save the life of a loved one in your community.

Drivers on Hackmann Road



If you see
someone engaging
in distracted
driving...

If they are in
YOUR car...

1. Ask them to put down their phone.
2. Offer to check their messages or give directions.
3. Gently remind them to focus on the road.

If they are in
A DIFFERENT
car...

1. Pay attention and be careful when driving near his or her car.
2. Try to give yourself some distance in case they stop or swerve.

Before you drive,
always remember to

PLAN

Put away phones and other distractions.

Limit activities while driving - such as interaction with other passengers or switching the radio station.

Avoid fatigue or loss of attention--do not drive when tired and do not daydream.

Never be unprepared for poor driving conditions or traffic.

Scan this to visit
the U.S.
Department of
Transportation's
website about
Distracted Driving



Citations

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