

Safety Newsletter

January, 2014

This Month's Topic: Distracted Driving

Distracted driving has become an epidemic in the United States, and its often fatal consequences are a threat to workers, and the public.

Year after year, the leading cause of worker fatalities is motor vehicle crashes. There's no question that new communications technologies are helping business work smarter and faster. But getting work done faster does not justify the dramatically increased risk of injury and death that comes with texting while driving.

What Is Distracted Driving?

Distracted driving is any activity that could divert a person's attention away from the primary task of driving.

Distractions while driving can be separated into three distinct groups:

- Visual - taking your eyes off the road
- Manual - taking your hands off the wheel
- Cognitive - taking your mind off what you're doing

All distractions endanger driver, passenger, and bystander safety. These types of distractions include:

- Using a cell phone to talk, text or browse the Internet
- Eating and drinking
- Talking to passengers
- Personal grooming such as applying make-up, brushing hair, flossing, etc.
- Reading, including maps
- Using a personal digital assistant (PDA) or navigation system (GPS)
- Watching a video
- Changing the radio station, CD, or Mp3 player

While any distraction can endanger drivers' safety, texting is the most alarming because it involves all three types of distraction.

Some people still don't know how dangerous distracted driving is. Others know about the risks of texting and talking while driving, but still choose to do so anyway. They make the mistake of thinking the statistics don't apply to them, that they can defy the odds. Still others simply lead busy, stressful lives and use cell phones and smartphones to stay connected with their families, friends, and workplaces. They forget or choose not to shut these devices off when they get behind the wheel.



"Many times I have come up on a car weaving and moving erratically only to find the driver talking on a cell phone. Don't be that driver! Pay attention to one of the most important parts of your job, getting to and from the job site safely."

Jess Borrego
Sr. Project Manager,
Alisto Engineering Group, Inc.

Distracted Driving Facts & Statistics:

- In 2013 in the U.S., there have been an estimated 1,021,948 crashes involving drivers using cell phones and texting.
- Reaction time is delayed for a driver talking on a cell phone as much as it is for a driver who is legally drunk.
- Studies show that drivers who send or receive text messages focus their attention away from the road for an average of 4.6 seconds. At 55 mph, this is equivalent to driving the length of a football field blindfolded!
- At any given daylight moment across America, approximately 660,000 drivers are using cell phones or manipulating electronic devices while driving, a number that has held steady since 2010.
- More than two-thirds of U.S. adult drivers aged reported they had talked on their cell phone while driving at least once in the past 30 days.
- People under the age of 20 are involved in more fatal crashes due to distractions than any other age group.
- Visual inattention (looking away from the road ahead) is the single most significant factor contributing to crash and near crash involvement.
- Recent studies have shown that "hands free" texting and talking on the phone while driving is just as distracting as using a regular hands on device.

Texting while driving:

- Causes 1,600,000 accidents per year and 330,000 injuries per year
- Makes you 23 times more likely to crash
- Is about 6 times more likely to cause an accident than driving intoxicated
- Is the same as driving after 4 beers
- Is the same as driving blind for 5 seconds at a time
- Slows your brake reaction speed by 18%
- Causes nearly 25% of ALL car accidents

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Undistracted Driving

There are several things that you can do to ensure your eyes, minds, and hands are engaged when driving.

Limit distractions

Never take personal electronic devices (PED) such as iPods, Mp3 players, headphones, Bluetooth devices or cell phones with you onto the ramp or roadways. Keep your electronic devices in your locker or with your personal items indoors. If you must have them with you, keep them on silent and in a storage compartment. Follow company policy when using company issued portable electronic devices.

Drive defensively

As important as it is to make sure you eliminate all distractions while you are driving, it is also important to be aware of other drivers who may be distracted, whether you're driving or are a pedestrian. Being aware of those around you can help you drive defensively and protect yourself. Follow company and local airport safe driving policies. Report any unsafe driving in the workplace to your supervisor. Keeping both hands on the wheel and maintaining good posture can help you to be more alert as you drive.

Make a commitment

Making a commitment to yourself, your company, and your family not to drive distracted can help keep you accountable for your actions. For example, create and sign a pledge among your peers to help hold each other accountable. You can even sign a pledge with your family, especially with new teenage drivers. Signing your name and making a commitment not to text, talk, or engage in other distracting activities while driving may have you think twice before you do it again.

Distracted driving doesn't become less dangerous when the work day is over. Alisto employees are encouraged to take - and share - the [pledge](#).

The consequences of texting while driving are also seen in work-related accidents, as motor vehicle accidents are among the leading cause of worker fatalities. Due to the political attention that texting while driving is garnering and the high number of employee deaths caused by motor vehicle accidents, OSHA has launched a Distracted Driving Initiative in partnership with the Department of Transportation to combat this safety issue.

Alisto has work procedures and rules that do not allow or require its employees to text while driving in order to carry out their work. Employees are encouraged to regard their vehicles as "text-free zones" to emphasize Alisto's commitment to workers, customers, and communities.

California has primary laws that prohibit **ALL** drivers from texting, or using a handheld cell phone while driving unless they employ a hands-free device. Having a "primary law" means that an officer can ticket the driver for the offense without any other traffic violation taking place.

If you are caught violating this law, you will be charged the following fees plus additional penalty assessments:

- First Offense: \$20 for the first offense
- Any Subsequent Conviction: \$50

However, additional penalty assessments can end up tripling or more the total fee amount. In Sonoma County, for example, a first cell phone-use offense will cost you, with penalty assessments, \$160.

Texting while driving also falls under this law.

References:

1. <http://www.distraction.gov/index.html>
2. <http://www.distraction.gov/content/get-involved/take-the-pledge.html>
3. http://www.nsc.org/safety_road/Distracted_Driving/Pages/distracted_driving.aspx
4. http://www.dmv.ca.gov/pubs/brochures/fast_facts/ffd128.htm
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6. <http://www.nhtsa.gov/Driving+Safety/Distracted+Driving/Policy+Statement+and+Compiled+FAQs+on+Distracted+Driving>
7. <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/rules-regulations/administration/rulemakings/final/Limiting-the-Use-of-Wireless-Communication-Devices.aspx>
8. http://www.nsc.org/safety_road/Distracted_Driving/Pages/DistractedDrivingResearchandStatistics.aspx
9. <http://www.dmv.org/ca-california/safety-laws.php#Cell-Phone-Laws>

Model: Mallory Souza

Alisto Engineering 2013 Safety Statistics

Motor Vehicle Accidents/ Total Miles Driven (01/01/13 – 12/08/13)	Lost Work Days/ Total Work Days (01/01/13 – 12/08/13)	Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (01/01/13 – 12/08/13)
0/ 245,129 miles	0 days*/ 235 days	0*

* From Edgewood Partners Insurance Center



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