

THE DANGERS OF Distracted Driving

Though driving a car may seem like a simple task, it requires quick reflexes, concentration and reasoning. When a driver is distracted, some — or all — of these important skills can be lost.

Distracted driving means the driver is doing something other than focusing on the road ahead. It can be anything that takes the driver's mind off of driving, hands off the wheel or eyes off the road. In the age of smartphones, tablets and other electronic devices, it's easy to get distracted when driving — even for just a second.

Though it seems harmless, a quick glance at a phone to read a text can be dangerous or even deadly. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) says sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for 5 seconds. That's like driving the length of an entire football field with your eyes closed if you're going 55 miles per hour. In that amount of time, a driver can hit a pedestrian, run a red light or stop sign, or crash into another vehicle.



The NHTSA says nearly 3,500 people died and almost 400,000 were injured in 2015 due to distracted driving crashes. Here's what we can do to help stop distracted driving:

- Never use a phone while driving. Put it in the back seat or out of reach to reduce the urge to look at it “just for a second.”
- Talk with your teens about distracted driving and tell them that the texts can wait. Lead by example.
- Sign a pledge to not drive distracted and stick to it. Ask family members and friends to sign it too. The “It Can Wait” pledge is available at itcanwait.usaa.com.



Did you know?

There are laws that prohibit distracted driving. Talking on a hand-held cellphone while driving is banned in 15 states and the District of Columbia. Text messaging is banned for all drivers in 47 states and the District of Columbia.

To learn about your state laws, go to www.iihs.org/iihs/topics/laws/cellphonelaws.