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DISTRACTED DRIVING

What is Distracted Driving?

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. These types of distractions include:

- Texting
- Using a cell phone or smartphone
- Eating and drinking
- Talking to passengers
- Grooming
- Reading, including maps
- Using a navigation system
- Watching a video
- Adjusting a radio, CD player, or MP3 player



But, because text messaging requires visual, manual, and cognitive attention from the driver, it is by far the most alarming distraction.

Key Facts and Statistics

- In 2010, 3092 people were killed in crashes involving a distracted driver and an estimated additional 416,000 were injured in motor vehicle crashes involving a distracted driver.
- 18% of injury crashes in 2010 were reported as distraction-affected crashes.
- 11% of all drivers under the age of 20 involved in fatal crashes were reported as distracted at the time of the crash. This age group has the largest proportion of drivers who were distracted.
- 40% of all American teens say they have been in a car when the driver used a cell phone in a way that put people in danger. ([Pew](#))
- Drivers who use hand-held devices are 4 times more likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves. ([Monash University](#))
- Text messaging creates a crash risk 23 times worse than driving while not distracted. ([VTTI](#))
- Sending or receiving a text takes a driver's eyes from the road for an average of 4.6 seconds, the equivalent-at 55 mph-of driving the length of an entire football field, blind. ([VTTI](#))
- Headset cell phone use is not substantially safer than hand-held use. ([VTTI](#))
- Driving while using a cell phone reduces the amount of brain activity associated with driving by 37%. ([Carnegie Mellon](#))

Inside this issue:

Distracted Driving **1**

Take Action to Stop
the Distraction **2**

Traumatic Brain
Injury **3**

Traumatic Brain
Injury Prevention **4**



Frequently Asked Questions

- Is distracted driving really a problem?

Distracted driving kills. The friends, family, and neighbors of the thousands of people killed each year in distracted driving crashes will tell you it is a very serious safety problem. The nearly half a million people injured each year will agree

- Sending or reading one text is pretty quick, unlike a phone conversation - wouldn't that be okay?

Texting is the most alarming distraction because it involves manual, visual, and cognitive distraction simultaneously. Sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for 4.6 seconds. At 55 mph, that's like driving the length of an entire football field, blindfolded. It's extraordinarily

Take Action to Stop the Distraction

While many motorists may perceive driving as a routine activity, attentive driving is critical as the traffic environment changes constantly and drivers must be prepared to react.

Tips to Avoid Distracted Driving

Drivers face many distractions behind the wheel. Share these tips with family and friends to take action to stop the distraction:

- Cell phones — turn off cell phones, or place them out of reach to avoid the urge to dial or answer. If a passenger is present, ask them to handle calls/texts.
- Music and other controls — pre-program favorite radio stations for easy access and arrange music (mp3 player/CDs/tapes) in an easy-to-access spot. Adjust mirrors and heat/AC before traveling, or ask a passenger to assist.
- Navigation — designate a passenger to serve as a co-pilot to help with directions. If driving alone, map out destinations in advance, and pull over to study a map.
- Eating and drinking — try to avoid food/beverage, at least messy foods, and be sure food and drinks are secured.
- Children — teach children the importance of good behavior in a vehicle; do not underestimate how distracting it can be to tend to children while driving.
- Passengers — speak up to stop drivers from distracted driving behavior.
- When making/receiving a call, ask if the person is driving. If so, ask them to call back at a safer time.



TEXT MESSAGING

lol no im nt bsy im only driving

Fast Facts

- Falls are the leading cause of TBI and recent data shows that the number of fall-related TBIs among children aged 0-4 years and in older adults aged 75 years or older is increasing.
- Among all age groups, motor vehicle crashes and traffic-related incidents result in the largest percentage of TBI-related deaths (31.8%).
- People aged 75 years old and older have the highest rates of TBI-related hospitalizations and death.
- Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS), a form of abusive head trauma (AHT) and inflicted traumatic brain injury (ITBI), is a leading cause of child maltreatment deaths in the United States.

Traumatic Brain Injury

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is a serious public health problem in the United States. Recent data shows that, on average, approximately 1.7 million people sustain a traumatic brain injury annually.

A TBI is caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head or a penetrating head injury that disrupts the normal function of the brain. Not all blows or jolts to the head result in a TBI. The severity of a TBI may range from “mild,” i.e., a brief change in mental status or consciousness to “severe,” i.e., an extended period of unconsciousness or amnesia after the injury. The majority of TBIs that occur each year are concussions or other forms of mild TBI.

Severe Traumatic Brain Injury

Each year, TBIs contribute to a substantial number of deaths and cases of permanent disability. In fact, TBI is a contributing factor to a third (30.5%) of all injury-related deaths in the United States.¹ On average, of the 1.7 million people who sustain a TBI each year in this country: 52,000 people die and 275,000 people are hospitalized.

A severe TBI not only impacts the life of an individual and their family, but it also has a large societal and economic toll. The estimated economic cost of TBI in 2010, including direct and indirect medical costs, is estimated to be approximately \$76.5 billion. Additionally, the cost of fatal TBIs and TBIs requiring hospitalization, many of which are severe, account for approximately 90% of the total TBI medical costs.

Types of Severe TBI

There are two types of severe TBI, each described below by associated causes:

- **Closed** – an injury to the brain caused by movement of the brain within the skull. Causes may include falls, motor vehicle crash, or being struck by or with an object.
- **Penetrating** – an injury to the brain caused by a foreign object entering the skull. Causes may include firearm injuries or being struck with a sharp object.

Potential Affects of Severe TBI

A non-fatal severe TBI may result in an extended period of unconsciousness (coma) or amnesia after the injury. For individuals hospitalized after a TBI, almost half (43%) have a related disability one year after the injury. A TBI may lead to a wide range of short- or long-term issues affecting:

- Cognitive Function (e.g., attention and memory)
- Motor function (e.g., extremity weakness, impaired coordination and balance)
- Sensation (e.g., hearing, vision, impaired perception and touch)
- Emotion (e.g., depression, anxiety, aggression, impulse control, personality changes)

Approximately 5.3 million Americans are living with a TBI-related disability and the consequences of severe TBI can affect all aspects of an individual's life. This can include relationships with family and friends, as well as their ability to work or be employed, do household tasks, drive, and/or participate in other activities of daily living.

Traumatic Brain Injury Prevention

Traumatic Brain Injury Prevention: Falls

Falls are one of the leading traumatic brain injury causes. The elderly are especially susceptible to brain injury from falls. Older people who live alone or in negligent nursing homes can fall, slip, or trip and sustain devastating brain and [head injuries](#).

Providing adequate lighting in the home and on walkways, moving furniture or obstacles from walking pathways, storing food and necessities in easily accessible areas, and providing adequate care for elderly people who need assistance with mobility or daily activities can reduce a person's chances of sustaining traumatic brain injury from falls.

To prevent traumatic brain injury from falls in the work place, employers should keep walking pathways clear of obstacles, provide hand railing on stairwells, keep tile or laminate floors dry, avoid placing work materials on high shelves, and prevent employees from climbing counter tops or desks to retrieve work materials.

Traumatic Brain Injury Prevention: Motor Vehicle Accidents

Motor vehicle accidents also cause a significant portion of traumatic brain injuries. Transportation accidents are the leading causes of brain injury deaths and disabilities among people 15 to 24 years of age. Fast, negligent driving or driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol can cause devastating accidents. Preventing friends, family members, and others from driving under the influence can reduce the rate of these accidents. Obeying traffic laws and wearing seatbelts can also help protect a person from sustaining traumatic brain injury.

Traumatic Brain Injury Prevention: Recreation

Recreational and pedestrian accidents can also cause serious brain injuries. Wearing a helmet during recreational activities such as bicycle riding, horseback riding, or during high impact, contact sports can prevent traumatic brain injury.

Other ways to prevent traumatic brain injury include:

- Buckling children into child safety seats, booster seats, or seatbelts when in a motor-vehicle.
- Using a step stool with railing to avoid falls when reaching objects on high shelves.
- Installing window guard rails to prevent a person from falling out of an open window.
- Installing safety gates at the top of stairs to prevent children from falling.
- Making sure a child's playground surface is covered in shock-absorbing material (hardwood mulch, sand).



A helmet is a good thing.