Cell Phones & Distracted Driving

The Growing Epidemic of Cell Phone Use While Driving
Distracted Driving Course

• Welcome
• Housekeeping
• Introductions
Course Objectives

• Define the term “distracted.”
• Understand the risk of using cell phones while driving.
• Identify tips to prevent distracted driving.
• Explain why using a cell phone while driving is a distraction.
• Know your state laws regarding cell phone use and text messaging.
Distracted Driving

According to National Safety Council 2014 *Injury Facts*, the three biggest causes of fatalities on the road include:

- Distracted driving
- Alcohol
- Speeding
State of Georgia APD#s, Claim Count, March FY2015-17

Average Daily Rate 6+ per DAY!

APD Claims

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State of Georgia APD trends (Costs)

APD Claims

- As of 3/31/2016: $2,108,174
- As of 3/31/2017: $2,495,549
- As of 3/31/2018: $2,555,545
Following Distance

What are you telling your Drivers?

Stay far enough back from the car in front of you:

A. So you can at least see the Bumper.
B. A car length for every 10 miles of speed you are going?
C. At least 3 to 4 second behind the car in front of you.

Correct Answer: C, this leaves you room to react and also allows time for debris to fall.
Nearly 1/3 of all crashes are caused by impairment.
Definition: Distracted

dis-tract-ed (dĭ-strāk’ -tĭd) adjective

• Having the attention divided.
• Rendered incapable of behaving, reacting, etc., in a normal manner.
Driving Distractions

- Passenger-related
- Vehicle-related
- Wireless devices
- Eating
- Smoking
- Daydreaming
- Looking at distractions outside the vehicle
- Personal hygiene
Driving Distractions

- Three types:
  - Mental
    - Mind on driving
  - Visual
    - Eyes on road
  - Physical
    - Hands on wheel
- (MVP)
Risks of Distraction

• 80% of crashes
• 65% of near-crashes
• Cell phones No. 1 distraction

All of these things take away from what you are supposed to be doing. Such as scanning the road a head for hazards. Just Drive!
Risks of Distraction

- Doubles rear-end collision risk
- Slows reaction time
- Miss traffic signals, signs and exits
- Miss half the information in driving environment – “look” but not “see”
- Increases traffic violations
- Increases risk of injury crash four times
True or False?

• Distracted driving is a form of aggressive driving.

True
You are 3 times more likely to be in a car crash if you are fatigued.

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Distracted Driving

The Science of Distracted Driving

Cell Phone Use vs. Under the Influence

Talking on a mobile device while driving is comparable to driving while intoxicated at a blood alcohol concentration of .08 and has four times the crash risk.
Texting on a mobile device while driving puts you at even greater risk, **up to 23 times the crash risk**; recent studies have shown that using voice-to-text is **more** distracting than texting by hand.

Although texting is clearly riskier because it involves all three types of distraction - visual, manual and cognitive, NSC data shows that **drivers talking on a cell phone are involved in many more crashes than drivers texting**.

In a recent study, NSC conservatively estimated **21% of crashes**, or 1.2 million crashes, involved a **driver talking on a cell phone**.
How to Stay Safe

What can you do to reduce your risk of crashes and injuries?

Avoid the distractions, turn off cell phone.
64% of people who have taken opioids felt it was safe to drive.

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Does cell phone use while driving cause traffic crashes?

YES, 4x factor
Frequently Asked Questions

• Is it safe to use a hands-free cell phone (headset, speakerphone, or other device) while driving?

NO!
Frequently Asked Questions

• Is talking on a cell phone any worse than having a conversation with a passenger in the car?

YES
Frequently Asked Questions

• In an emergency, should I use my cell phone while driving?

Once you are sitting on the side of the road.
Frequently Asked Questions

• What do the studies say about the relative risk of cell phone use when compared to other activities like eating or drinking?

Both are types of Distracted Driving, Cell phone use results accidents.
Assumption 1

• “The genie is out of the bottle.” Potentially distracting devices have invaded the driver’s domain so pervasively that attempts to control them now are impossible or ill-advised.
Distracted Driving

Understanding the Distracted Driver

Driver Confidence and Self-Awareness

- Even though they recognize distracted driving is dangerous, many drivers mistakenly believe their own crash risk is lower than other drivers.

- Most drivers believe they are personally capable of driving safely while using their mobile device, even though they believe other drivers cannot drive safely while using a mobile device.
Assumption 2

• Eating fast food, applying cosmetics, and other in-car distractions also present risks, so why are we not worrying about them?
Assumption 3

• Hands-free equipment lessens or eliminates driver distraction.
Distracted Driving

Understanding the Distracted Driver

Common Driver Errors

Drivers make two common errors when they are cognitively distracted:

1. Inattention blindness
2. Slower response and reaction time
Thousands die every year from distracted driving.

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What’s at Risk?

Societal Impact: Financial Cost

- A Harvard risk analysis study estimated the annual direct cost of crashes caused by cell phone use while driving to be $43 billion, which amounts to approximately $120 million every single day of the year!

- The direct costs of these crashes are just the tip of the iceberg. The indirect costs more than triple the financial impact on us as a society.
Distracted Driving

What’s Being Done?

Societal Impact

Every year in the United States, distracted driving claims the lives of thousands and results in hundreds of thousands of injuries.

- The NSC conservatively estimates that 1 out of every 4 collisions is due to distracted driving. This equals 1.3 million collisions resulting in more than 400,000 injuries and over 3,000 deaths each year.
- A distracted driving collision occurs every 24 seconds.
Assumption 4

- Cell phones contribute to highway safety because they let people contact law enforcement and emergency services immediately, reducing response time.
House Bill 673 also known as the “Hands Free Law” was passed by the Georgia General Assembly and signed into law by Governor Nathan Deal. The Hands Free Law is effective as of July 1, 2018. The following is a brief description of what the law states. Link to the complete law [https://www.gahighwaysafety.org/](https://www.gahighwaysafety.org/)

- A driver cannot have a phone in their hand or use any part of their body to support their phone. Drivers can only use their phones to make or receive phone calls by using speakerphone, earpiece, wireless headphone, phone is connected to vehicle or an electronic watch. GPS navigation devices are allowed.
Distracted Driving
Hands Free Georgia Law

- Headsets and earpieces can only be worn for communication purposes and not for listening to music or other entertainment.
- A driver may not send or read any text-based communication unless using voice-based communication that automatically converts message to a written text or is being used for navigation or GPS.
- A driver may not write, send or read any text messages, social media, emails or internet data content.
- A driver may not watch a video unless it is for navigation.
- A driver may not record a video (continuously running dash cams are exempt).
Distracted Driving
Hands Free Georgia Law

- Music streaming apps can be used provided the driver activates and programs them when they are parked. Drivers cannot touch their phones to do anything to their music apps when they are on the road. Music streaming apps that include video also are not allowed since drivers cannot watch videos when on the road. Drivers can listen to and program music streaming apps that are connected to and controlled through their vehicle's radio.

- The hands-free law does NOT apply to the following electronic communication devices and the following devices can be used by the driver when on the road: radio, citizens band radio, citizens band radio hybrid, commercial two-way radio
Distracted Driving
Hands Free Georgia Law

communication device or its functional equivalent, subscription-based emergency communication device, prescribed medical device, amateur or ham radio device, or in-vehicle security, navigation, or remote diagnostics system.
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