

DISTRACTED DRIVING AWARENESS DAY
FACT SHEET



Three Seconds. That's All it Takes.

80% of all crashes and 65% of all near-crashes recently studied by the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute involved driver inattention within 3 seconds of the crash.

Check out these statistics to learn how **your behavior** behind the wheel puts you at an increased risk for a crash.

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| Reaching for a moving object | 8 times increase in risk |
| Driving drowsy | 5 times increase in risk |
| Looking at an external object | 4 times increase in risk |
| Reading | 3 times increase in risk |
| Dialing a phone | 3 times increase in risk |
| Applying makeup | 3 times increase in risk |
| Talking on hand-held phone | 1 time increase in risk |
| Eating | 1 time increase in risk |
| Reaching for a non-moving object | 1 time increase in risk |

(Source: Virginia Tech Transportation Institute Naturalistic Driving Study, Relative Risk Estimates for Crash/Near Crash Inattention Events)

In 2006, 961 people died on the roadways of Virginia. There were 151,692 crashes and 73,348 people injured. Driver inattention was a leading factor in many of these crashes. That's a big price to pay for a little distracted driving. Keep your eyes and mind on the road.

Think about these facts:

- AAA reports that 4,000 to 8,000 crashes are caused every day by distracted driving, and that overall, approximately 43,000 die annually in car crashes.
- A 2003 study prepared for AAA by the University of North Carolina found the following percent of drivers engaging in the referenced distracted behavior:
 - 100% manipulating vehicle controls
 - 97% reaching and/or leaning
 - 91% manipulating music/audio controls
 - 86% external distraction
 - 77% conversing
 - 71% eating or drinking

- That same study also reported that infants were eight times and children four times more likely than adults to be distractions to the driver. Finally, including conversing, drivers spent 31% of their time behind the wheel distracted. This fell to 16% if conversing was not included.
- A Nationwide Mutual Insurance Survey concluded that more than 80% of drivers admit to blatantly hazardous behavior, including changing clothes, steering with a foot, painting nails and shaving.
- In a survey of more than 2,000 adults, Harris Interactive found that 73% of those respondents admitted that they talk on their cell phone while driving.
- In a 2006 young driver survey conducted by the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and State Farm Insurance, 94% of teens polled reported seeing the passengers of their teen peer drivers distracting that driver. In that same survey, 89% reported it was common to see teens driving while talking on a cell phone.
- According to the National Safety Council, conversing on either a hand-held or a hands-free cell phone lead to significant decreases in driver performance.
- A University of Utah study found that people are as impaired when they drive and talk on a cell phone as they are when they drive intoxicated at the legal blood-alcohol limit of .08 percent.
- The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety found that a driver who uses a mobile phone (up to 10 minutes prior to a crash) has a four times higher likelihood of a crash resulting in injury. They determined that using a hands-free phone was no safer.
- NHTSA policy on cell phone use: "The primary responsibility of the driver is to operate a motor vehicle safely. The task of driving requires full attention and focus. Cell phone use can distract drivers from this task, risking harm to themselves and others. Therefore, the safest course of action is to refrain from using a cell phone while driving."

Top 10 Tips to Minimize Your Distracted Driving



1. **CHANGE YOUR WAYS** and recognize the activities that distract you; such as eating, conversing on the phone, or changing a CD. Once you recognize these distractions, you can work to eliminate them.
2. **MAKE A PLAN.** Know your route in advance and make sure that you have a good understanding of your directions. Check weather and road conditions. If you are transporting children, make sure that they are all properly buckled up and that you items to keep them occupied, such as books on tape or soft toys.
3. **MANAGE YOUR TIME** so that you do not have to multi-task or drive aggressively on the road.
4. **DON'T LET YOUR DRIVE TIME BECOME YOUR DOWN TIME.** Understand that driving is not your "down time" or a time to catch up on phone calls, personal grooming, or dining.
5. **SCAN** the roadway to make sure that you are aware of others on the road at all times. Be prepared for the unpredictability of others.
6. **CONCENTRATE** on your driving. Make sure that you are not upset or tired when getting on the road. This is not the time to have a serious or emotional conversation with your passengers.
7. **PULL OVER** if you need to do something that will take your eyes and/or mind off of the road. Make sure that you find a safe place to pull over first.
8. **REDUCE THE USE!** Use technology sensibly.
9. **TAKE A REFRESHER CLASS!** Everyone can pick up bad habits through the years. A driver improvement class can raise your awareness and help you assess your driving behaviors.
10. **BUCKLE UP, EVERY TRIP, EVERY TIME.** Making sure that everyone is properly buckled up is the best defense against distracted drivers.

To learn more about distracted driving, visit www.drivesmartva.org or call us at 804-340-2870.

Safety Partners: AAA Mid-Atlantic, AIG Agency Auto, Allstate, DMV: The Virginia Highway Safety Office, DRIVE SMART Virginia, Erie Insurance Group, Farmers Insurance Group, Federal Highway Administration, GEICO, Liberty Mutual Insurance, Nationwide Insurance, Progressive Insurance Group, Rockingham Group, State Farm Insurance, USAA Educational Foundation, Virginia Automobile Dealers Association, Virginia Farm Bureau, The Virginia State Police