

ARTICLE

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Dangers Of Distracted Driving



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In 2008, distracted driving caused nearly 6,000 deaths and injured over 500,000 people according to the National Highway Safety Transportation Administration. In New Jersey alone 1,821 crashes involved handheld devices and another 1,383 involved hands free during that same year.

Texting While Driving

One of the more prevalent causes of distracted driving is texting behind the wheel. According to distraction.gov, a website launched by the U.S. Department of Transportation, texting is one of the most dangerous activities a driver can do because it involves drivers taking their hands off the wheel, eyes off the road and minds off of driving safely. Studies have indicated that driving while using a cell phone, either hands-free or handheld, can delay the reaction time of a driver as much as having a blood alcohol concentration of .08.

The American Automobile Association (AAA) and the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety launched a campaign to have all 50 states enact texting bans that cover all drivers, regardless of age or experience, by 2013. AAA says that the bans are an effective way to address this issue, because drivers pay attention. After the text messaging ban went into effect in California, a study by the Auto Club of Southern California noted that texting by drivers decreased by nearly 70 percent.

Many state legislatures have addressed the texting issue in this year. According to the Governors Highway Safety Administration, 11 states have enacted laws that prohibit texting while driving in 2010. Now, 30 states, including New Jersey, have laws which ban text messaging while driving; while only eight states ban cell phone use by drivers entirely.

Other Forms Of Distracted Driving

With the increase of technology and attention of state legislatures, texting is one of the most well-known types of distracted driving. There are, however, other forms of distracted driving that can be equally as dangerous. Eating, drinking, looking at a map for directions, animals and even changing the radio can all take a drivers eyes off the road and cause them to lose focus on what they are doing.