



Teaching Points for in-class discussion

Due to technological advancements, we are a texting culture. In Ontario, 85% of homes reported they own at least one cell phone.

Drivers who are engaged in distractions are more likely to be in a crash or near crash event compared with non-distracted drivers.

- Text messaging (or texting) on a cell phone — 23 times more likely
- Talking on a cell phone — 4 to 5 times more likely
- Reading — 3 times more likely
- Dialing on a hand-held device — 3 times more likely
- Talking or listening on a hand-held device — 1.3 times more likely

Using your hand-held communication device takes you away from the primary task of driving. Driving requires your full attention at all times. Below are some alarming statistics.

Teen driver collisions are the leading cause of permanent injuries and deaths in Canada. More fatally injured 16-19 year distracted drivers are male than female. (Traffic Injury Research Foundation)

- 43% of drivers in grade 12 admit to texting behind the wheel (2013 Ontario Student Drug and Health Survey)
- 37% of teens report being a passenger in a car with a parent who was talking on a cell phone
- 23% reported being a passenger in a car with a parent who was texting while driving
- Cell phones are one of the most common distractions for drivers. Drivers engaged in text messaging on a cellular phone are 23 times more likely to be involved in a crash or near crash event compared with non-distracted drivers. (Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, 2010)
- 40% of collisions in Ottawa in 2013 involved distracted-driving. (City of Ottawa, 2014)
- Between 2009 and 2013, distracted driving collisions resulted in 6463 injuries and 18 fatalities in Ottawa. (City of Ottawa, 2014)

5 EASY STEPS

1. Review teaching points
2. Have a discussion with students
3. Download the video from ottawapolice.ca and watch with students
4. Have students take the pledge (sticker on poster)
5. Give students thumb band as a symbolic gesture to remind them to Leave the Phone Alone

How distractions delay a driver's reaction time:

- It takes an attentive driver 1.5 seconds to react to a situation on the roadway. When drivers are distracted, reaction time is doubled.
- At 100 km/h, that's like traveling the distance of a football field without looking.
- The additional 1.5 seconds it takes an inattentive driver to react to hazards or changing conditions on the roadway could be the difference between safely avoiding them and hitting something or someone.
- You must focus on your driving at all times, even when stopped at traffic lights. Using the phone while you are stopped still prevents you from seeing what is happening around you.
- Driving distracted has the same impact on your reaction time as consuming four alcoholic drinks and getting behind the wheel. You wouldn't drive impaired, would you?

Tips to Avoid Distracted Driving/Texting and Driving

- Allow phone calls to go to voicemail
- Do not text, surf the web or read emails
- Stop at safe locations (rest stops or commuter lots) to make and receive calls
- Keep your eyes and mind on the road
- Turn your cell phone off
- Place your cell phone in the trunk of your car
- Download safety app.

What's hands-free?

Any device that you do not touch, hold or manipulate while driving, other than to activate or deactivate it. For example, actions such as dialing or scrolling through contacts, or manually programming a GPS device are not allowed.

Fines / Penalties

In Ontario, the fine for distracted driving is \$490.00 and 3 demerit points (September 2015)

What can you do to prevent texting and driving?

- Everyone has a role to play in preventing distracted driving.
- As a passenger, remind the driver to focus on their driving if they reach for the phone - take responsibility for your safety.
- Ensure the person you are contacting is not engaged in driving. If they are, tell them to call you back when it is safe to do so.
- Help promote safe driving and the Leave the Phone Alone campaign with your friends and family.