

# Defeat Distracted Driving

Distracted driving has become a major contributor to traffic crashes, along with alcohol and excessive speed. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:

- Eight percent of fatal crashes, 15 percent of injury crashes, and 14 percent of all police-reported motor vehicle traffic crashes in 2018 were reported as distraction-affected crashes.
- In 2018, 2,841 people were killed and an estimated additional 400,000 people were injured in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers.

## Distracted driving involves one or more of the following components:

### Visual Distraction

Looking away from the road at 55 miles per hour for as little as three seconds will result in the vehicle traveling 250 feet, almost the length of a football field.

### Manual Distraction

Removing one or both hands from the steering wheel to perform non-driving tasks, such as dialing a cell phone or adjusting the radio.

### Cognitive Distraction

The most dangerous form of driver distraction, involves any activity that causes the driver to take their mind off the task of driving. Daydreaming is a common form of cognitive distraction.

Multi-tasking while driving can also lead to cognitive distraction. Cognitive distraction can cause a driver to become unaware of critical visual information. Research has shown cognitive distraction to have dangerous effects on driving.

Texting is one of the most dangerous forms of distraction as it involves all three types of distraction and makes the risk of being involved in a crash 23 times more likely.

Distracted driving can lead directly to extremely hazardous driving behaviors, including speeding, following too closely and erratic lane usage. Distractions also reduce a driver's reaction time when responding to a dangerous situation. The American Transportation Research Institute reports that the likelihood of the driver of a commercial motor vehicle being involved in a crash increases significantly when the driver has been convicted of one of these hazardous actions.

- » Program the GPS and adjust the mirrors and radio before you start driving.
- » Don't multi-task while driving.
- » Don't drive while fatigued. Make sure you are well rested before getting behind the wheel.
- » Never text or email while driving. Pull off to a safe location if you must text.
- » Avoid using a cell phone while driving. Even the use of a hands-free device is dangerous as it involves cognitive distraction.
- » Avoid distracting activities, such as eating, personal grooming and reaching for items.
- » Buckle up. It is your last line of defense. Seat belts save lives.

