



# TRAFFIC ALERT



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## Distracted Driving

### What is Distracted Driving?

Distracted driving is any non-driving activity a person engages in that has the potential to distract him or her from the primary task of driving and thus increases the risk of crashing.

### There are three main types of distraction:

- Visual– taking your eyes off the road;
- Manual– taking your hands off the wheel;
- Cognitive– taking your mind off what you're doing.

While all distractions can endanger drivers' safety, *texting is the most alarming* because it involves all three types of distraction.

### Research on distracted driving reveals some surprising facts:

- Cell phone use while driving, whether it's a hand-held or hands-free, delays a driver's reactions as much as having a blood alcohol concentration at the legal limit of .08 percent. (Source; University of Utah)
- Driving while using a cell phone reduces the amount of brain activity associated with driving by 37 percent. (Source: Carnegie Mellon)
- 80 percent of all crashes and 65 percent of near crashes involve some type of distraction. (Source: Virginia Tech)
- Nearly 6,000 people died in 2008 in crashes involving a distracted or inattentive driver, and more than half a million were injured. ( Source: NHTSA)
- The worst offenders are the youngest and least-experienced drivers: men and women under 20 years of age. (Source: NHTSA)
- Drivers who use hand-held devices are *four times as likely* to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves. (Source: Insurance Institute for Highway Safety)

Department members should be aware that distracted driving comes in various forms, such as cell phone use, texting while driving, eating drinking, talking with passengers, as well as using in-vehicle technologies and portable electronic devices. There are other less obvious forms of distractions which Department members deal with on a daily basis, including daydreaming or dealing with strong emotions .

*Be Safe*

*Be Courteous*

*Be Professional*