



## California's Distracted Driving Awareness Month April 2011 Distracted Driving Facts

Research on distracted driving reveals some surprising facts:<sup>1</sup>

- "Distraction" is a specific type of inattention that occurs when drivers divert their attention from the driving task to focus on some other activity instead. (*Source: Overview of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Driver Distraction Program*).
- The **No.1** source of driver inattention is use of a wireless device. (*Source: Virginia Tech/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*)
- Driving while using a cell phone reduces the amount of brain activity associated with driving by 37 percent. (*Source: Carnegie Mellon*)
- Using a cell phone while driving, whether it's 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*)

### California Data

- As of July 2010, California is one of eight states with laws banning hand-held cell phone use and one of 30 states banning texting while driving.
- California is currently conducting the nation's first statewide observational distracted driving survey in spring 2011. Results of the survey are expected to be released in late April and will be available at [www.ots.ca.gov](http://www.ots.ca.gov).
- Law enforcement is increasingly cracking down on cell phone use and texting while driving. The California Highway Patrol alone is writing more than 10,000 cell phone tickets each month.
- During April 2011, more than 225 local law enforcement agencies, including the CHP, will be conducting 'zero tolerance' enforcement mobilizations as part of California's *Distracted Driving Awareness Month*.
- The fine for a first time texting or hand-held cell phone violation is \$159, with subsequent tickets costing \$279.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.distraction.gov/stats-and-facts/>



## 2009 National Data

- In 2009, 5,474 people were killed on U.S. roadways and an estimated 448,000 were injured in motor vehicle crashes that were reported to have involved distracted driving (*Fatality Analysis Reporting System and General Estimates System*).
- In 2009, an estimated 2,217,000 people were injured in motor vehicle traffic crashes. The number of people injured during a crash with reported distraction in 2009 was estimated at 448,000 – representing 20 percent of injuries.
- Of those people killed in distracted-driving-related crashes, 995 involved reports of a cell phone as a distraction (18% of fatalities in distraction-related crashes).
- Of those injured in distracted-driving-related crashes, 24,000 involved reports of a cell phone as a distraction (5% of injured people in distraction-related crashes).
- Sixteen percent of fatal crashes in 2009 involved reports of distracted driving.
- The age group with the greatest proportion of distracted drivers in 2009 was the under-20 age group – 16 percent of all drivers younger than 20 involved in fatal crashes were reported to have been distracted while driving. The younger, inexperienced drivers under 20 years old have the highest proportion of distraction-related fatal crashes
- Of those drivers involved in fatal crashes who were reportedly distracted, the 30–to 39-year olds had the highest proportion of cell phone involvement).
- The proportion of fatalities reportedly associated with driver distraction increased from 10 percent in 2005 to 16 percent in 2009.
- In 2009, 867 fatal crashes were reported to have involved cell phones as distraction (18% of all fatal distracted driving crashes).
- Of those drivers reportedly distracted during a fatal crash, the 30-to 39-year old drivers were the group with the greatest proportion distracted by cell phones.

Source: *NHTSA Distracted Driving 2009 Traffic Safety Facts: Research Note September 2010*.