

# BLUEPRINT FOR ENDING DISTRACTED DRIVING



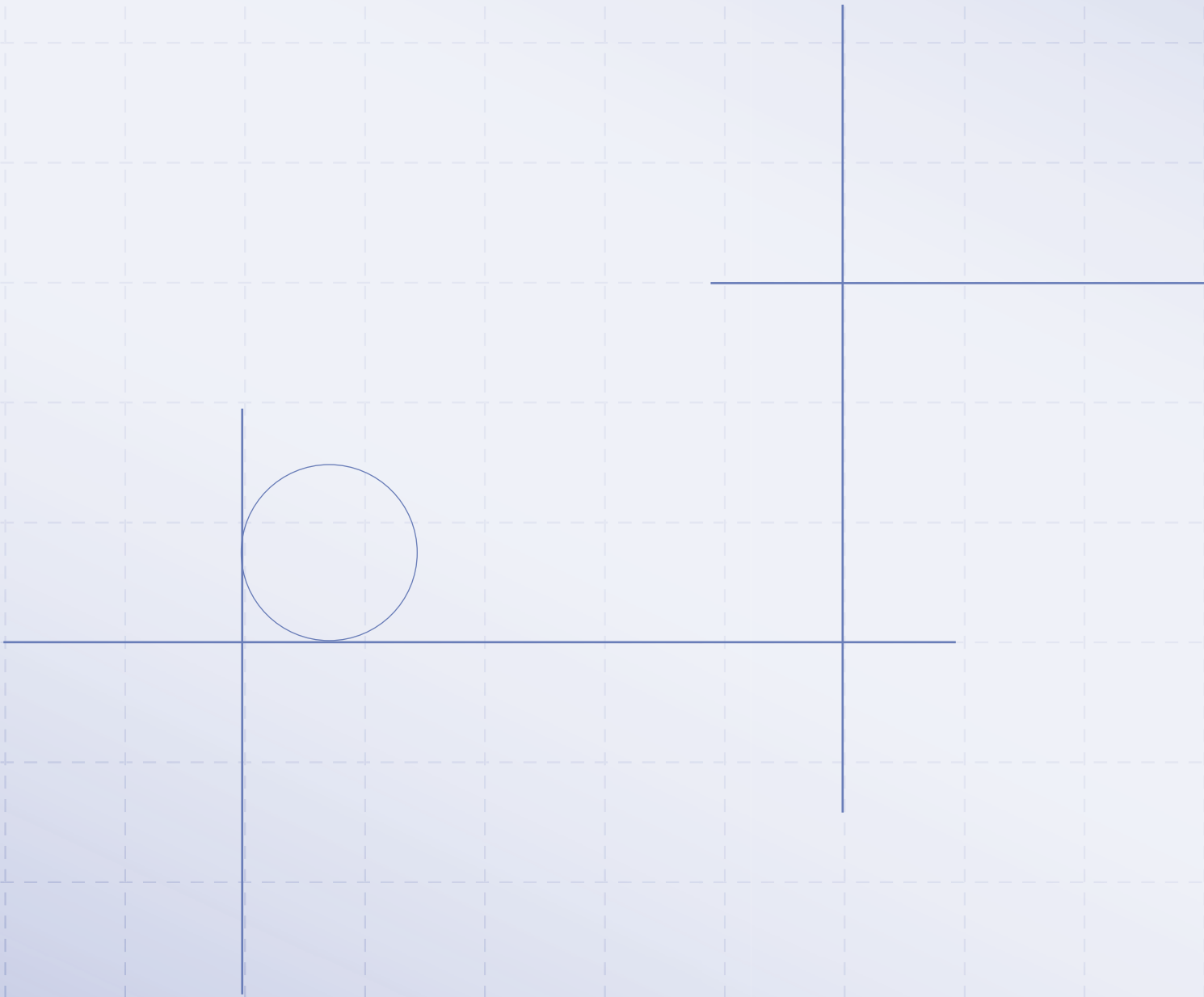
**D!STRACTION.GOV**



U.S. Department of Transportation  
**National Highway Traffic Safety  
Administration**



★★★★★  
**NHTSA**  
www.nhtsa.gov



# BLUEPRINT FOR ENDING DISTRRACTED DRIVING

*UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF SECRETARY RAY LAHOOD, THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION LAUNCHED A NATIONAL CAMPAIGN IN 2009 TO END THE DANGEROUS PRACTICE OF DISTRRACTED DRIVING. WHILE THESE EFFORTS HAVE BOOSTED PUBLIC ATTENTION TO THE PROBLEM AND BUILT MOMENTUM FOR ACTION IN COMMUNITIES AROUND THE COUNTRY, SERIOUS BEHAVIORAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL CHALLENGES REMAIN. ADDRESSING THESE ISSUES WILL REQUIRE THE FULL COMMITMENT AND PERSISTENCE OF MANY STAKEHOLDERS.*

## **THE BLUEPRINT FOR ENDING DISTRRACTED DRIVING**

**lays out a plan for building on the progress we've made to date—and arms safety partners, advocates, and the Nation's future leaders with clear, forward-thinking strategies.**



# OVERVIEW OF THE PROBLEM: DISTRACTED DRIVING KILLS

With more than 300 million wireless subscriptions in America today—and a growing number of devices and services designed to keep people constantly connected—technology is playing an increasing role in enhancing our quality of life. Yet using these technologies while you're behind the wheel can have devastating consequences.

The U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates that there are at least 3,000 deaths annually from distraction-affected crashes—crashes in which drivers lost focus on the safe control of their vehicles due to manual, visual, or cognitive distraction.<sup>1</sup>

Studies show that texting simultaneously involves manual, visual, and mental distraction and is among the worst of all driver distractions. Observational surveys show that more than 100,000 drivers are texting at any given daylight moment, and more than 600,000 drivers are holding phones to their ears while driving.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> [www.nhtsa.gov/About+NHTSA/Press+Releases/2012/U.S.+Transportation+Secretary+LaHood+Announces+Lowest+Level+Of+Annual+Traffic+Fatalities+In+More+Than+Six+Decades](http://www.nhtsa.gov/About+NHTSA/Press+Releases/2012/U.S.+Transportation+Secretary+LaHood+Announces+Lowest+Level+Of+Annual+Traffic+Fatalities+In+More+Than+Six+Decades)

<sup>2</sup> [www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811517.pdf](http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811517.pdf)

## Young Drivers Are at Greatest Risk

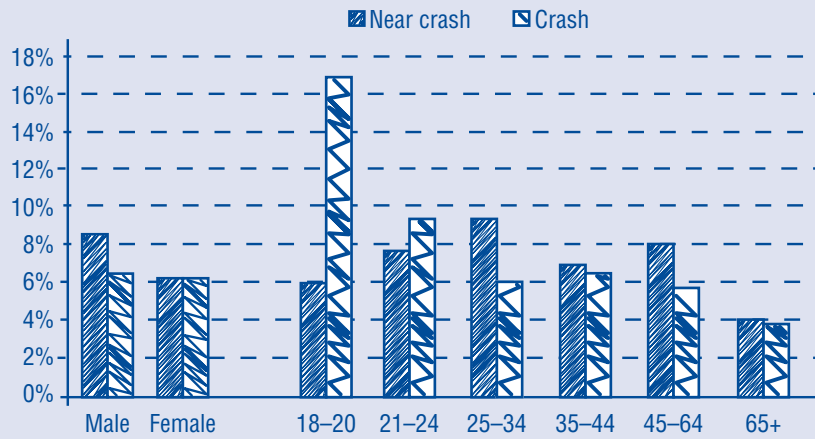
While distracted driving can take on many forms and affects all road users, young drivers are at particular risk.

- ⚡ A nationally representative survey of distracted driving attitudes and behavior published in 2011 shows that a young driver is most likely to have been involved in a crash or near-crash.
- ⚡ Drivers under 25 are two to three times more likely than older drivers to send text messages or e-mails while driving.
- ⚡ While almost all drivers believe that sending text messages while driving is very unsafe, young passengers are much less likely than older passengers to speak up if the driver is texting behind the wheel.

*SENDING OR RECEIVING A TEXT TAKES A DRIVER'S EYES FROM THE ROAD FOR AN AVERAGE OF 4.6 SECONDS, THE EQUIVALENT – AT 55 MPH – OF DRIVING THE LENGTH OF AN ENTIRE FOOTBALL FIELD, BLIND. (VTTI)*

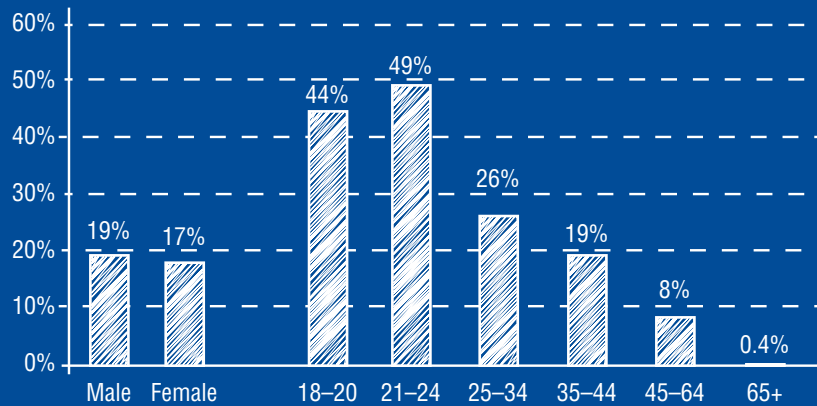
**Figure 1. Crash or Near-Crash Involvement as a Driver in the Past Year, by Sex and Age (Percentage)**

*Have you been involved in a crash or near-crash as a driver in the past year?*

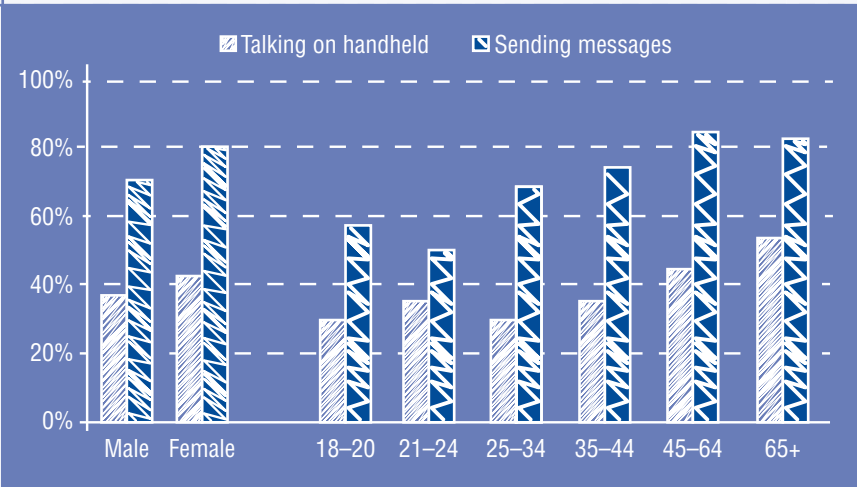


**Figure 2. Sending Text Messages or E-mails While Driving, by Sex and Age (Percentage Ever)**

*Do you ever send text messages or e-mails when you are driving?*



**Figure 3. As a Passenger, How Likely Are You to Say Something if Your Driver Is Talking on a Handheld or Sending Messages, by Sex and Age (Percentage Very Likely)**





# BUILDING MOMENTUM TO END DISTRACTION: PROGRESS ON THE ISSUE

For the past three years, the U.S. Department of Transportation has been working to highlight the issue of distracted driving and provide safety partners in the States with the necessary tools to address the problem.

In 2010, NHTSA published a “Driver Distraction Program Plan” that serves as DOT’s guiding framework in its efforts to eliminate crashes related to distraction.<sup>3</sup> The plan lays out strategies for:

- ⚡ Better understanding the problem;
- ⚡ Reducing distraction from in-vehicle devices;
- ⚡ Avoiding crashes that might be caused by distraction; and
- ⚡ Improving driver behavior.

## Raising Public Awareness

- ⚡ Secretary LaHood has hosted two Distracted Driving Summits (September 2009 and 2010) and engaged in numerous public activities to both bring focus to the issue of distraction and to identify strategies to combat the problem.
- ⚡ In December 2009, DOT launched *Distraction.gov*—the first-ever Federal Web site dedicated to raising awareness and supporting safety advocacy on the issue. *Distraction.gov* serves as a vital information center for people to get the facts on distracted driving and take action in their communities. In November 2011, DOT re-launched the site with suggested actions for a variety of stakeholders, including parents, employers and teachers, and unveiled a new portal designed especially for teens to further raise awareness among young drivers.

---

<sup>3</sup> [www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/nti/distracted\\_driving/pdf/811299.pdf](http://www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/nti/distracted_driving/pdf/811299.pdf)

**ABOUT 40 PERCENT OF ALL AMERICAN TEENS SAY THEY HAVE BEEN IN A CAR WHEN THE DRIVER USED A CELL PHONE IN A WAY THAT PUT PEOPLE IN DANGER. (PEW)**

- ⚡ In November 2010, Secretary LaHood launched *Faces of Distraction*, an online video series that explores the tragic consequences of texting and cell phone use while driving.
- ⚡ DOT has partnered with organizations including the Ad Council, Walt Disney Corporation, Consumer Reports, ESPN, the Better Business Bureau, State Farm, Regal Cinemas, and others on national and local advertising to highlight the dangers of distracted driving.

### **Leading by Example: Public Policies on Distraction**

- ⚡ President Obama issued an Executive Order in October 2009 prohibiting Federal employees from texting while driving government vehicles or while using government-supplied cell phones while driving any vehicles.
- ⚡ NHTSA led a consensus effort to develop a sample law to prohibit texting while driving. The sample law helps State legislators enact effective distracted driving laws and create uniform legal policies and procedures across the country. States can use the sample law as a starting point to craft laws prohibiting texting while driving.
- ⚡ As of June 2012, 39 States and the District of Columbia have enacted laws banning texting for all drivers. Thirty-five of these States require primary enforcement of their laws.

- ❖ DOT and NHTSA are working with employers to put an end to driving distraction—both on the job and off. As part of the 2010 Distracted Driving Summit, DOT and the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS) identified more than 550 U.S. companies employing 1.5 million people nationwide that committed to enacting anti-distracted-driving employee policies.
- ❖ Across its agencies, DOT has enacted regulations or advisories against distracted driving—including highways, rail, and air.
  - ❖ In September 2010, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration banned commercial truck and bus drivers from texting while driving. In November 2011, the agency strengthened its initial policy by banning all hand-held cell phone use by commercial drivers.
  - ❖ In February 2011, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration banned texting on electronic devices by drivers operating motor vehicles containing hazardous materials.
  - ❖ The Federal Railroad Administration has banned railroad operating employees from using cell phones or other



***9 OUT OF 10 DRIVERS  
SUPPORT LAWS THAT BAN TEXTING.  
(NHTSA, NATIONAL DISTRACTED DRIVING  
TELEPHONE SURVEY, 2011)***

electronic devices on the job when the devices could interfere with safety-related duties.

- ✦ The Federal Aviation Administration has advised air carriers to create and enforce policies that limit distractions in the cockpit and keep pilots focused on transporting passengers safely.
- ✦ In February 2012, NHTSA proposed voluntary guidelines for vehicle manufacturers to discourage the introduction of excessively distracting devices that are integrated into vehicles. NHTSA expects to finalize these Phase 1 Distraction Guidelines during 2012.





## Research & Development

- ⚡ In 2011, NHTSA piloted high-visibility enforcement programs in Hartford, Connecticut, and Syracuse, New York. The pilot projects, which promoted the message “Phone in One Hand, Ticket in the Other,” showed that increased law enforcement efforts combined with targeted media can get distracted drivers to put down their cell phones and focus on the road.<sup>4</sup>
- ⚡ In 2010, NHTSA conducted a representative phone survey on distracted driving attitudes and behavior. More than half of the respondents indicated that they believe using a cell phone and/or sending a text message or e-mail makes no difference in their own driving performance—yet as passengers, 90 percent said they would feel very unsafe if their drivers were talking on a hand-held cell phone, texting, or e-mailing. These findings are consistent with other research showing that despite well-publicized dangers of distracted driving, many Americans choose to use cell phones while driving.
- ⚡ NHTSA is currently analyzing data from a naturalistic driving study designed to examine differences between hand-held, hands-free, and integrated hands-free cell phone use. The findings are expected to be completed by the end of 2012.

<sup>4</sup> [www.nhtsa.gov/About+NHTSA/Press+Releases/2011/New+Research+Shows+Enforcement+Cuts+Distracted+Driving](http://www.nhtsa.gov/About+NHTSA/Press+Releases/2011/New+Research+Shows+Enforcement+Cuts+Distracted+Driving)

*“Strong laws  
combined with  
highly visible police  
enforcement can  
significantly reduce  
dangerous texting and  
cell phone use behind  
the wheel.”*

**—U.S. Transportation  
Secretary Ray LaHood**



# NEXT STEPS: BLUEPRINT FOR ENDING DISTRACTED DRIVING

Under Secretary LaHood's leadership, distracted driving has received unprecedented national, State, and local attention. Moving forward, this greater awareness must lead to increased advocacy. In particular, it will be critical to use the current momentum to make progress in the following key areas:

## **Enact and Enforce Tough State Laws**

- ⚡ As of June 2012, 39 States have enacted anti-texting laws, and 10 States have passed laws banning all hand-held phone use by drivers. One way to help address the problem is to encourage the remaining 11 States to pass anti-texting laws.
- ⚡ NHTSA's high-visibility enforcement pilot programs in Hartford and Syracuse showed that drivers *do* change their cell phone use when faced with good laws, tough enforcement, and public education campaigns. NHTSA will expand its pilot enforcement programs by initiating two enforcement campaigns in California and Delaware this summer. These and future projects will continue to yield strategies and tools for law enforcement to effectively enforce distraction laws.
- ⚡ The highway reauthorization bill enacted by the Senate, *The Motor Vehicle and Highway Safety Act of 2012 (S.1813)* includes \$39 million for grants to States that enact laws prohibiting texting while driving. If enacted in the next reauthorization, these grants will contribute to State efforts to enact and enforce distracted driving laws and help reduce crashes, injuries, and fatalities.

## Address Technology

- ✦ Following up on the proposed Phase 1 Distraction Guidelines for devices integrated into vehicles, NHTSA is considering Phase 2 guidelines to address portable devices *not* built into the vehicle, including aftermarket GPS navigation systems, smart phones, electronic tablets and pads, and other mobile communications devices.
- ✦ Phase 3 guidelines may address voice-activated controls to further minimize distraction in factory-installed aftermarket and portable devices.
- ✦ NHTSA is also looking at advanced crash warning and driver monitoring technologies to help avoid crashes caused by distraction.

## Science

- ✦ A solid scientific understanding of distracted driving is necessary to guide further policy and technology development.
- ✦ Better methods are needed to confirm the role of distraction in crashes. Accurate and consistent crash reports are essential and require widespread adoption of model reporting





protocols. New techniques are needed to assist crash investigators in identifying when distractions were present at the time of the crash.

- ⚡ More studies are needed to determine which types of distractions—and under which circumstances—create the greatest crash risk. Experimental research, naturalistic driving studies, and crash data analyses are needed to answer key questions and provide support for laws, regulations, and investment in technology.

***A TEEN DRIVER IS MORE LIKELY THAN THOSE IN OTHER AGE GROUPS TO BE INVOLVED IN A FATAL CRASH WHERE DISTRACTION IS REPORTED. IN 2009, 16 PERCENT OF TEEN DRIVERS INVOLVED IN FATAL CRASHES WERE REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN DISTRACTED. (NHTSA)***

## **Better Educate Young Drivers**

- ⚡ NHTSA is working with the American Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association to update its driver education model curriculum to include the latest information on driver distraction. The curriculum, designed to educate young novice drivers with the latest teaching techniques and technology, is widely used in many States.
- ⚡ In April 2012, DOT announced the Distracted Driving Design Challenge to encourage high school students to spread the word about distracted driving by designing a creative icon that can be shared on Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and other social networks.

## Getting Involved

While progress has been made in the fight to end distracted driving, there is much more to do to end this dangerous practice. It's clear the problem is complex—and the solutions require parents, teens, educators, employers, industry, and government to get involved.

Still, the first line of defense against this risky behavior must be personal responsibility by all drivers to put their wireless devices away and keep their focus on the road.



## Responsibility

- ⚡ All drivers need to understand the risks of distracted driving, recognize their own inability to safely multi-task while behind the wheel, and make the right decisions.
- ⚡ Friends and family members need to use their influence to steer others toward responsible driving behaviors. Speaking up could save a life.
- ⚡ Every driver should visit *Distraction.gov* and take the pledge to drive distraction-free.

## Advocacy

- ⚡ Policies are effective at guiding driver behavior—but they don't happen without advocacy. State laws, local ordinances, workplace policies, and organizational resolutions that address the dangers of distracted driving communicate concern about the risks and intolerance for dangerous behavior.
- ⚡ Employers, teachers, parents, teens and community groups looking to raise awareness can visit *Distraction.gov* for specific suggestions and tools they need to help end distracted driving in communities nationwide.
- ⚡ Parents, teachers, and youth leaders can educate teens and help establish rules for responsible driving. Teens are especially at risk for distracted driving. They are more frequently involved in crashes involving cell phone use, they overestimate their ability to multi-task, and they underestimate the consequences.

*DISTRACTION-AFFECTED CRASHES ARE PREVENTABLE. DISTRACTED DRIVING DOES NOT JUST HAPPEN – IT IS A CHOICE. WORKING TOGETHER, WE CAN ALL HELP REDUCE DRIVER DISTRACTION, SAVE LIVES, AND PREVENT INJURIES.*

*FOR MORE INFORMATION  
ON THE DEPARTMENT OF  
TRANSPORTATION'S WORK  
TO END DISTRACTED DRIVING,  
VISIT [DISTRACTION.GOV](http://DISTRACTION.GOV).*

