

**Department of Defense Instruction (2 Apr 2010)  
prohibits DOD personnel from engaging in text  
messaging:**

- While driving any government owned vehicles on or off installations.
- While driving any vehicle, on or off official government business, while using government-supplied electronic equipment or personal devices capable of text messaging.
- Use of hands-free devices is also discouraged, as they create significant distractions from safe driving performance.



39 states, the District of Columbia and Guam ban text messaging for all drivers. Twelve of these laws were enacted in 2010 alone.

10 states, the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands prohibit all drivers from using hand-held cellphones while driving.

The following link to the [distraction.gov](http://www.distraction.gov) website provides information on the laws that pertain to your state: <http://www.distraction.gov/content/get-the-facts/state-laws.html>.

Two laws that apply in most states are a primary law, which means an

officer can ticket the driver for the offense without any other traffic violation taking place, and a secondary law, where an officer can issue a ticket only if a driver has been pulled over for another violation (like speeding).

*Information compiled from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the National Safety Council.*



**U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS/SAFETY CENTER**

# **Distra**cted **Driving** the new drunk driving



## **WHAT IS DISTRACTED DRIVING?**

***Distracted driving is any activity that diverts a person's attention from the primary task of driving. All distractions endanger driver, passenger and bystander safety. Potential distractions include:***

- Texting
- Talking to passengers
- Using a cellphone or smartphone
- Grooming
- Eating, drinking or smoking
- Reading, including maps
- Using a navigation system
- Watching a video
- Adjusting a radio, CD or MP3 player



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### **There are three main types of distraction:**

- **Manual** - Taking your hands off the wheel
- **Visual** - Taking your eyes off the road
- **Cognitive** - Taking your mind off driving

Text messaging requires visual, manual and cognitive attention from the driver. It is by far the most alarming distraction.



### **Multitasking is a myth:**

The human brain does not perform two tasks at the same time. Instead, the brain handles tasks sequentially, switching between one task and another. The brain can juggle tasks very rapidly, which leads us to erroneously believe we are doing two tasks at the same time. In reality, the brain is switching attention between tasks and performing only one task at a time.



# Driving distracted

### **Inattention blindness:**

Vision is the most important sense we use for driving and it is the source of the majority of information gathering. Yet, drivers using hands-free and hand-held, cellphones have a tendency to “look at,” but not “see,” objects. Estimates indicate drivers using cellphones only see up to 50 percent of the information in their driving environment.

Distracted drivers experience inattention blindness. They are looking out the windshield, but do not process everything in the roadway necessary to effectively monitor their surroundings, seek and identify potential hazards, and respond to unexpected situations.

To demonstrate this, figure 1 is a typical representation of where drivers would look while not using a phone. Figure 2 shows where drivers looked while talking on hands-free cellphones.



**Figure 1.**

Where drivers not using a cell phone looked.  
Source: Transport Canada



**Figure 2.**

Where drivers using a hands-free cell phone looked.  
Source: Transport Canada

### **Some interesting facts:**

- 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 (Virginia Tech Transportation Institute).
- 11 percent of all drivers under the age of 20 involved in fatal crashes were reported as being distracted at the time of the crash. This age group has the largest proportion of drivers who were distracted.
- In 2010, more than 3,000 people were killed and 416,000 injured in motor vehicle crashes involving a distracted driver.

