

# DISTRACTED DRIVING

## IN THE UNITED STATES



# 3,142

people were killed in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers in 2019.<sup>1</sup>

Distracted driving is doing another activity that takes the driver's attention away from driving. Driving distractions include using cell phones, eating, talking to other passengers, and adjusting radio or climate controls.

### The 3 Main Types of Distracted Driving



**Taking your eyes off the road**



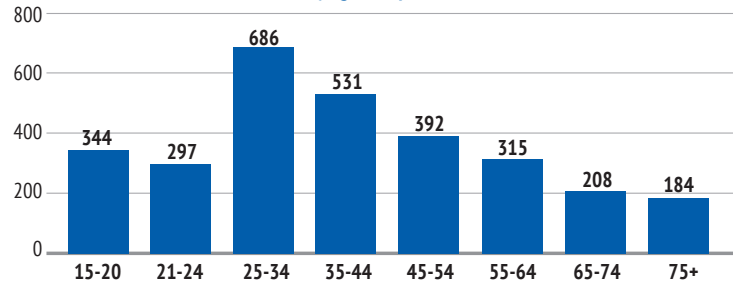
**Taking your hands off the wheel**



**Taking your mind off driving**

### Number of Distracted Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes

By Age Group, 2019



Source: Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), 2019.

### Get the Facts

Many states have taken steps to help prevent distracted driving. Examples include:

- banning texting while driving
- banning hand-held cell phone use while driving
- requiring passenger limits for young drivers
- using high-visibility enforcement of these laws

However, research on the effectiveness of cell phone and texting laws is mixed.



**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**  
National Center for Injury Prevention and Control

*Working together, we can help keep people safe on the road—every day.*

# Promising Strategies to Help Address Distracted Driving

## High-Visibility Enforcement: Cell Phone Use and Texting

High-visibility enforcement (HVE) efforts aim to prevent cell phone use while driving by increasing the perceived risk of getting a ticket. HVE combines increased enforcement, such as saturation patrols (increased number of officers patrolling a specific area), with paid and earned media.



### Impact

HVE can reduce cell phone use while driving. Pilot HVE programs in Syracuse, New York, and Hartford, Connecticut, used increased enforcement efforts with paid media, press events, and news releases over a one-year period. Syracuse saw a 32% decrease in hand-held cell phone use among drivers, while Hartford saw a 57% decrease.<sup>2</sup>



### By the Numbers

As of 2020 the use of HVE is limited to a few states.<sup>3</sup>



### Learn More

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety keeps track of distracted driving laws.

You can learn more here:

[www.iihs.org/topics/distracted-driving](https://www.iihs.org/topics/distracted-driving)

## Graduated Driver Licensing: Young Passenger Restriction

Graduated driver licensing (GDL) is a system that helps new drivers gain experience under low-risk conditions by granting driving privileges in stages. Comprehensive GDL systems include five components,<sup>4</sup> one of which addresses distracted driving: young passenger restriction.



### Impact

Limiting the number of young passengers can help reduce distracted driving among teen drivers.<sup>3</sup> A national study of 15-17 year old drivers showed that fatal crashes were 21% lower when zero passengers were allowed and 7% lower when one passenger was allowed, compared with policies that allowed two or more passengers.<sup>5</sup>



### By the Numbers

For drivers with intermediate or provisional licenses:

- 16 states and Washington, D.C., have a limit of zero young passengers without adult supervision.<sup>6</sup>
- 29 states have a limit of one young passenger without adult supervision.<sup>6</sup>

### REFERENCES

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For more information about distracted driving, visit [www.cdc.gov/transportationsafety/distracted\\_driving](https://www.cdc.gov/transportationsafety/distracted_driving).