



U.S. DOT and NHTSA Kick Off 5th Annual U Drive. U Text. U Pay. Campaign

April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month

April 5, 2018 | Washington, DC

The U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is kicking off National Distracted Driving Awareness Month today. NHTSA is mobilizing law enforcement officers nationwide to look out for drivers texting or using their phone behind the wheel. The 'U Drive. U Text. U Pay.' high-visibility enforcement campaign, now in its fifth year, is supported by a \$5 million national media buy. The ads are in both English and Spanish, and will appear on television, radio, and digital platforms targeting motorists aged 18 to 34 – those who, data shows, are most likely to die in distraction-affected crashes.

"Cell phones have a place in our lives, but not while driving," said **NHTSA Deputy Administrator Heidi King**. "Everyone should understand the very real dangers of texting while driving. Taking your eyes off the road for a moment is all it takes to cause a crash and change lives forever. Remember, no text or call is worth a life."

In 2016, new NHTSA data shows that at least 3,450 people were killed in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers, including those who were texting and driving. Key statistical findings in NHTSA's new [2016 Distracted Driving Research Note](#) and [Teen Distracted Driver Fact Sheet](#) include:

- Nine percent of fatal crashes in 2016 were reported as distraction-affected crashes.
- Six percent of all drivers involved in fatal crashes were reported as distracted at the time of the crash.
- Nine percent of drivers 15 to 19 years old involved in fatal crashes were reported as distracted. This age group has the largest proportion of drivers who were distracted at the times of the fatal crashes.
- In 2016, there were 562 non-occupants (pedestrians, bicyclists, and others) killed in distraction-affected crashes.
- In 2016, 70 percent of the distracted drivers in fatal crashes were male, as compared to 74 percent of drivers in all fatal crashes.
- Hand-held cell phone use while driving is highest among 15- to 29-year-old drivers.
- Female drivers with a cell phone have been more likely to be involved in fatal distracted-driving crashes as compared to male drivers every year since 2012.

To prevent tragedies due to distracted driving, motorists are urged to:

- Turn off electronic devices and put them out of reach before starting to drive.



- Be good role models for young drivers and set a good example. Talk with your teens about responsible driving.
- Speak up when you are a passenger and your driver uses an electronic device while driving. Offer to make the call for the driver, so his or her full attention stays on the driving task.
- Always wear your seat belt. Seat belts are the best defense against unsafe drivers.

All pedestrians and bicyclists should focus on their surroundings and not on their electronic devices.

Currently, 47 states, DC, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands ban text messaging for all drivers. All but four have primary enforcement laws - an officer may cite a driver for using a hand-held cell phone without any other traffic offense taking place and be given a fine. Fifteen states, DC, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands prohibit all drivers from using hand-held cell phones while driving. Important to note: 38 states and DC ban all cell phone use by novice drivers, and 20 states and DC prohibit it for school bus drivers.