

Texting and Driving



A new traffic safety epidemic has emerged on America's roadways that demands immediate attention: distracted driving.

In 2011, Nebraska reported there were 3,515 drivers involved in distracted driving crashes. Of those drivers, 1,213 were injured. Of the drivers distracted during fatal crashes, cell phones are often a leading distraction (of those identified).

According to a Carnegie Mellon study, driving while using a cell phone reduces the amount of brain activity associated with driving by 37 percent.

Text messaging is of heightened concern because it combines three types of distraction - visual, manual and cognitive. In other words, texting involves taking your eyes off the road, your hands off the wheel, and your mind off the task of driving.

Ten Tips for Managing Driver Distractions

1. Turn it off. Turn your phone off or to silent mode before you get in the car.
2. Spread the word. Set up a special message to tell callers that you are driving and you'll get back to them as soon as possible.
3. Pull over. If you need to make a call, pull over to a safe area first.
4. Use your passengers. Ask a passenger to make the call for you.
5. X the Text. Don't ever text and drive, surf the web or read your email while driving. It is dangerous and against the law in most states.
6. Know the law. In Nebraska it is against the law to use a handheld wireless communication device to read, type or send written communication while operating a motor vehicle. Fines range from \$200 to \$500.
7. Prepare. Review maps and directions before you start to drive. If you need help when you are on the road, ask a passenger to help or pull over to a safe location to review the map/directions again.
8. Secure your pets. Pets can be a big distraction in the car. Always secure your pets properly before you start to drive.
9. Keep the kids safe. Pull over to a safe location to address situations with your children in the car.
10. Focus on the task at hand. Refrain from smoking, eating, drinking, reading and any other activity that takes your mind and eyes off the road.