

Texting and Driving Facts

We as parents know that one of the most dangerous and tempting distractions to teen drivers are cell phones. Do they know that talking and texting while behind the wheel is the leading factor contributing to crashes blamed on inattentive drivers? The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration reported that 3,154 individuals were killed and an estimated 424,000 injured in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers in 2013.

Technically, there are three different kinds of distractions, say experts: 1) visual (taking eyes off the road), 2) manual (taking one or more hands off the wheel), and (3) cognitive (memory and attention.) These three distractions increase the risk of a crash over 20% higher than non-distracted driving.

Provide your teen with useful options to talking or texting on a cell phone while driving:

- Complete any call or text before starting the car.
- Get directions and try to picture where you're going before turning the key.
- Check in with friends or parents only after arrival.
- Pull over for urgent calls.

Educate your teen driver to know that using a cell phone while driving is only acceptable in an emergency (and only then, by pulling over to answer it). Stress to them that texting behind the wheel is never okay.

For more information on national distracted driving issues, visit www.distraction.gov.