

## WHY IS TEXTING AND DRIVING DANGEROUS?

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Texting and driving has become a large issue in today's society, even making an appearance in [pop culture](#). For instance, a teen character in Netflix's popular series *House of Cards* died in a texting while driving crash that resulted in the driver crashing into a water tower, a *One Tree Hill* character's life was spared when he received a kidney transplant from someone who died after a texting while driving crash, and Sue from *The Middle* performed an educational skit about texting and driving on a recent episode.

Besides seeing this issue on TV, we are further reminded of these dangers through highly publicized campaigns. These include AT&T's infamous "It Can Wait" campaign or even Iowa's Department of Transport's efforts discourage phone use while driving, which utilized [Taylor Swift lyrics](#) to make a point.

But even with this issue referenced in our day-to-day lives, do we have a true sense of how dangerous texting and driving really is?

It's easy to become desensitized to the campaigns, pop culture references, and tragic news stories. However, one thing is for certain: the dangers of texting and driving are all-too real, and they're not to be written off as merely a television show plot twist. Keep reading to learn the frightening reasons why this issue is dangerous for everyone on the road.

## Texting and Driving Diverts Attention from the Road

It's no secret that texting while driving takes a driver's attention away from the road, but many people think, "*it's only a few seconds*". This assumption is erroneous.

Sending or reading a text causes drivers, on average, to take their eyes off the road for five seconds. While this doesn't seem like much, this is enough time for a driver traveling at 55 miles per hour to drive the distance equal to the length of a [football field](#). Doing this is the equivalent of driving that distance with closed eyes, which most drivers would never willingly do. So, what makes taking your eyes off the road for those five seconds to send a text any safer?

The truth of the matter is that texting while driving results in [400%](#) more time with a driver's eyes off the road, seriously increasing the chances of a crash. Furthermore, teens that text while driving are proven to veer out of the lane during 10% of their total [drive time](#), as their eyes are off the road and they aren't paying attention to the direction of their vehicle.

## WEEK # 3 Health Assignment

Although drivers may think that they're agile enough to safely text while drive—a [poll](#) shows that 77% of adults and 55% of teenage drivers believe that they can easily manage texting while simultaneously navigating the road—this belief is unfounded. In fact, texting while driving increases the chance of a crash by 23 times.

# Texting Is All Three Types of Distracted Driving

There are three types of distracted driving: manual, cognitive, and visual. Texting is all three types, demonstrating just how dangerous this activity is. First, there are visual distractions, which are the most common. This is anything that takes your eyes off the road. Clearly, texting while driving ticks off this box, as it requires a driver to divert their eyes from the road.

Next, there are manual distractions. This is anything that requires drivers to take one or more hands off the steering wheel for any reason. This could be something like eating while driving, changing the radio station, or taking a sip of coffee. Again, texting also incorporates this kind of driver distraction.

Finally, there are cognitive distractions. This is anything that takes a driver's mind off the road ahead of them. Texting certainly does this, as it redirects a driver's focus onto the conversation they're engaged in, taking their mind off of the task at hand of safely navigating the road.

Because texting encompasses all three types of distractions, it's arguably the most dangerous action to participate in while driving.

## Texting While Driving Leads to Fatalities

While texting while driving certainly doesn't always lead to a fatality, there are a wealth of statistics that show that texting and driving is directly connected to traffic deaths. The National Safety Council reports that cell phone use leads to 1.6 million crashes on a [yearly](#) basis while texting while driving is six times more likely to cause a crash than drunk driving is. One out of every four traffic crashes that occur in the U.S. are spurred by cell phone usage, and furthermore, each [day](#), 11 teens die as a result of texting and driving, which is a downright astounding number. Over [3,000](#) teens and young drivers die yearly due to texting while driving.

As if these statistics aren't scary enough, there are many real-life examples of deaths that were completely preventable, if only drivers could have resisted the urge to text while driving. For example, Massachusetts teen Aaron Deveau was convicted of homicide at the age of 18 when he got into an crash as a result of texting and driving. He struck and killed a 55 year old when his car crossed the double yellow line.

## WEEK # 3 Health Assignment

Another real-life instance is found in the example of Elizabeth Meyers of Maryland, who killed a motorcyclist when she was texting and driving. The cyclist had the right of way, but her lax behavior led to his untimely death. Clearly, these tragic crashes depict the scariest reality of this deadly habit.

Remember that these deaths are completely preventable. Because texting is practiced so frequently by many drivers, it creates a false sense of security that it's "safe". However, it only takes one second for a crash to happen. Don't become immune to the reality of texting and driving dangers. Prevent a crash and avoid becoming a statistic by putting your phone away while driving once and for all.