

#### HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

##### **Evan Schwalbe**

Ex-Officio Member, Co-Chair  
(920) 424-1009  
schwalbe@uwosh.edu

##### **Colleen McDermott**

Ex-Officio Member, Co-Chair  
(920) 424-1217  
mcdermot@uwosh.edu

##### **Dawn Dettlaff**

Non-represented Classified Staff Member  
(920) 424-1869  
dettlafd@uwosh.edu

##### **Rabar Hawramy**

Student Member  
hawrar93@uwosh.edu

##### **Charles Hermes**

Non-represented Classified Staff Member  
(920) 424-3466  
hermes@uwosh.edu

##### **Christopher Stratton**

Academic Staff Member  
(920) 424-1201  
strattonc@uwosh.edu

##### **Jonathon Wilson**

Academic Staff Member  
(920) 424-0385  
wilsonjo@uwosh.edu

##### **Jennifer Kloes**

Student Member  
kloesj17@uwosh.edu

##### **Anna Filipova**

Faculty Member  
(920) 424-0037  
filipova@uwosh.edu

##### **Dana Merriman**

Faculty Member  
(920) 424-3076  
vaughan@uwosh.edu

##### **Kim Freier**

Represented Classified Staff Member  
(920) 424-2082  
freier@uwosh.edu

##### **George Paul**

Represented Classified Staff Member  
(920) 424-0377  
paul@uwosh.edu

##### **Lin Schrottky**

Represented Classified Staff Member  
920-424-2110  
schrottkt@uwosh.edu

##### **Joseph LeMire**

**University Police Chief**  
Ex-Officio Member  
(920) 424-1212  
lemirej@uwosh.edu

##### **Pamela MacWilliams**

**Director of Student Health Center**  
Ex-Officio Member  
(920) 424-0425  
macwillp@uwosh.edu

##### **Michael Morrissey**

**Hazardous Waste/Emergency Planning**  
Ex-Officio Member  
(920) 424-3426  
morrissm@uwosh.edu



## Environmental Health and Safety Committee

Volume #14 March, 2013  
A newsletter for and about safety at UW Oshkosh



# ON THE ROAD AGAIN

## WHAT IS DISTRACTED DRIVING?

Distracted driving is any activity that could divert a person's attention away from the primary task of driving. *All* distractions endanger driver, passenger, and bystander safety. These types of distractions include:

- Texting
- Using a cell phone or smartphone
- Eating and drinking
- Talking to passengers
- Grooming
- Reading, including maps
- Using a navigation system
- Watching a video
- Adjusting a radio, CD player, or MP3 player

But, because text messaging requires visual, manual, and cognitive attention from the driver, it is by far the most alarming distraction.

The best way to end distracted driving is to educate all Americans about the danger it poses. On this page, you'll find facts and statistics that are powerfully persuasive. If you don't already think distracted driving is a safety problem, please take a moment to learn more. And, as with everything on [Distraction.gov](http://www.distraction.gov), please share these facts with others. Together, we can help save lives.

For more information on distracted driving:  
<http://www.distraction.gov/index.html>

## Key Facts and Statistics

- In 2011, 3,331 people were killed in crashes involving a distracted driver, compared to 3,267 in 2010. An additional, 387,000 people were injured in motor vehicle crashes involving a distracted driver, compared to 416,000 injured in 2010.
- 18% of injury crashes in 2010 were reported as distraction-affected crashes.  
In the month of June 2011, more than 196 billion text messages were sent or received in the US, up nearly 50% from June 2009. (CTIA)
- 11% of all drivers under the age of 20 involved in fatal crashes were reported as distracted at the time of the crash. This age group has the largest proportion of drivers who were distracted.
- 40% of all American teens say they have been in a car when the driver used a cell phone in a way that put people in danger. (Pew)
- Drivers who use hand-held devices are 4 times more likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves. (Monash University)
- Text messaging creates a crash risk 23 times worse than driving while not distracted. (VTTI)
- Sending or receiving a text takes a driver's eyes from the road for an average of 4.6 seconds, the equivalent-at 55 mph-of driving the length of an entire football field, blind. (VTTI)
- Headset cell phone use is not substantially safer than hand-held use. (VTTI)
- Driving while using a cell phone reduces the amount of brain activity associated with driving by 37%. (Carnegie Mellon)

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The best way to help fight distracted driving is to get educated. Below are answers to some frequently asked questions that will help you better understand the safety threat posed by texting and cell phone use on America's roadways.

1. **Is distracted driving really a problem?** Distracted driving kills. The friends, family, and neighbors of the thousands of people killed each year in distracted driving crashes will tell you it is a very serious safety problem. The nearly half a million people injured each year will agree.
2. **What is distracted driving?** Distraction occurs any time you take your eyes off the road, your hands off the wheel, and your mind off your primary task: driving safely. Any non-driving activity you engage in is a potential distraction and increases your risk of crashing.
3. **If it's so dangerous, why do people do it?** Some people still don't know how dangerous distracted driving is. Others know about the risks of texting and talking while driving, but still choose to do so anyway. They make the mistake of thinking the statistics don't apply to them, that they can defy the odds. Still others simply lead busy, stressful lives and use cell phones and smartphones to stay connected with their families, friends, and workplaces. They forget or choose not to shut these devices off when they get behind the wheel.
4. **Who are the most serious offenders?** Our youngest and most inexperienced drivers are most at risk, with 16% of all distracted driving crashes involving drivers under 20. But they are not alone. At any given moment during daylight hours, over 800,000 vehicles are being driven by someone using a hand-held cell phone.
5. **Sending or reading one text is pretty quick, unlike a phone conversation - wouldn't that be okay?** Texting is the most alarming distraction because it involves manual, visual, and cognitive distraction simultaneously. Sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for 4.6 seconds. At 55 mph, that's like driving the length of an entire football field, blindfolded. It's extraordinarily dangerous.
6. **Is it safe to use a hands-free device to talk on a cell phone while driving?** So far, the research indicates that the cognitive distraction of having a hands-free phone conversation causes drivers to miss the important visual and audio cues that would ordinarily help you avoid a crash.
7. **Why doesn't the U.S. Department of Transportation make distracted driving illegal?** Passenger car driving behavior falls under the jurisdiction of the individual states, so the U.S. DOT can't ban it. Congress has considered a number of good laws to prevent distracted driving, but unfortunately nothing has passed yet. However, many states have stepped up to pass tough laws against texting, talking on a cell phone, and other distractions. You can visit our [State Laws](#) page to learn about the laws in your state.
8. **What else can DOT do to prevent distracted driving?** Even though we can't make texting or talking on a cell phone while driving illegal, we have been pretty busy. Please visit our [DOT Action](#) page to learn more.
9. **What can I do to help?** We're glad you asked! Visiting <http://www.distraction.gov/index.html> site and learning about the dangers of distracted driving. The next thing you'll want to do is protect yourself. [Take the pledge](#) to drive phone-free and turn your cell phone off when you turn your ignition on. And if you're a passenger, make sure your driver does the same. If you want to do more, please take a look at our [Get Involved](#) section - we've got plenty of ideas to get you started.



**Check it out. It very possibly could save your life and those of others!!**

All information was acquired from this awesome website:  
<http://www.distraction.gov/>

