

TAKE ACTION

to stop distracted driving



A distracted driver is a dangerous driver!

Driving demands your full attention—all the time. About one third of crashes and near crashes happen just after a distraction. Distracted driving is a danger for both new and experienced drivers. Check these stories:

“I noticed a large truck weaving behind me as it entered the highway. The truck pulled up behind me. I realized that the driver was busy text-messaging someone. He was not paying attention to the road.”

“One Saturday morning a number of years ago, I was driving from yard sale to yard sale. I was distracted by trying to read my list of sales.... I drove into a ditch and up onto a front lawn.”

“Some years ago a guy driving a car next to mine kept looking at me. I looked back. After all, he was cute! Unfortunately, he also forgot to look forward. He crashed into the car in front of him.”

Quick Facts

- In Alberta, a traffic crash occurs every 5 minutes. Alberta crashes cost about \$12 million every single day.
- Every year, drivers that get distracted cause at least 25,000 crashes in Alberta.
- Distracted drivers are 3 times more likely to be involved in a collision.
- 70 per cent of Canadians think that distracted driving is a serious problem.
- During rush hour, a city driver must keep track of about 3,000 items. Compare this to a fighter pilot. During non-combat flight, pilots must track just 300 items.

Electronic Distractions: Cell phones, MP3 Players, and others

- Do not use a cell phone when driving. Even hands-free cell phones create problems.
- Turn on your phone's message system before driving.
- Tell people you don't take calls while driving. When you call someone who is driving, say you will call back later.
- Read or send text messages before or after the trip.
- Prepare your car before you drive. Set climate controls. Set the radio, MP3, or CD player. Or, ask your passenger to adjust for you.
- Plan your route before the trip. Don't watch your Global Positioning System (GPS) screen while driving.

Inside Distractions

Do you think of your vehicle as part of your home or office? Do you try to get more business done on the road? Think again! Driving requires your full attention.

- Eat or drink before hitting the road, or when the car is safely stopped.
- Apply makeup, shave, or brush hair before getting into the car.
- Read, write or check messages before or after the trip.

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Outside Distractions

- Watch for hazards. Signals, signs, and other dangers can appear in a split second.
- Ignore billboards, video, and other roadside attractions.
- Plan an easy, safe route for your trip.

Distractions in Your Head

Did you ever miss your turn-off because you were so wrapped up in thoughts? Emotions and deep thoughts can distract drivers.

- Keep your mind on driving. Don't worry or daydream.
- Do you have passengers? Avoid intense talk and arguments.
- What about kids? Don't drive if they won't behave or calm down. Pull over safely or wait until everyone is ready for the road.

Keep Young Drivers Safe

Drivers aged 16-19 have the highest rate of crashes causing death. Young drivers need lots of practice to gain experience and reduced their risk.

- Remember that young people watch your driving. They learn from you. So, drive with no distractions. Tell them that driving is complex. Explain that distractions are dangerous. Enforce rules.
- When young drivers travel with other teens, crashes happen more often. For the first 6 to 12 months of driving, teens should drive alone or with family members. This will reduce distractions.

Do you need more information on distracted driving? Contact:

Alberta Office of Traffic Safety: www.saferoads.com

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety: www.basilsforsafety.org/DistractedDrivingBrochure.pdf

Alberta Health Services: www.capitalhealth.ca/EspeciallyFor/LEARN/default.htm

In your community contact:



Learn more about injury prevention. Learn how to prevent injuries from affecting you and your family. Call us at the *Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research*, at 780-492-6019. You can also send us an e-mail at acicr@ualberta.ca or visit our website at www.acicr.ualberta.ca.