Distracted driving facts

By its nature, driving requires multitasking and the skills to pay attention to several things at once. Our ability to drive safely depends on a focused effort—it’s recipe for disaster for a driver to take on additional tasks and unrelated mental engagement while traveling down the road.

Advancing technology—and the greater numbers of smart phones as well as our reliance on these devices have combined to generate a growing hazard of inattentive drivers on our roadways.

North Dakota is doing something about it. There’s a law and it is being enforced.

North Dakota has an all-driver ban on composing, sending or reading any electronic message or data, including accessing the Internet through a communications device—while driving a vehicle. This “texting” ban is also in effect when the vehicle is temporarily stopped, such as at a stoplight.

The texting law is “primary” enforcement, which means that a law officer can and will pull you over for this—and needs no other reason.

The ticket is $100.

When you are pulled over for holding and looking at your cell phone while driving—be sure your insurance is up-to-date and everyone in the vehicle is buckled up, or the fines will really start to pile up.

According to Experian, US smartphone users age 18 to 24 send 2,022 texts per month on average—67 text per day.

Teen drivers

- Teens are often the earliest and strongest adopters of new technology
- Teens are not the only drivers who text while driving but they are the most likely
- Among teens age 14-17 the number of texts they send per day increased from a media of 60 in 2009 to a median of 100 in 2011.¹
- Texting is the dominant daily mode of communication between teens and all those with whom they communicate.¹
- Distraction poses the greatest threat to teens because of their inexperience behind the wheel

Drivers under 18 in North Dakota are banned from ANY use of a wireless communications device while driving.

¹PewResearch Internet Project http://www.pewinternet.org/2012/03/19/teens-smartphones-texting/

Though deaths and injuries due to texting drivers have become alarming in recent years, distraction is more than cell phone use.

Distracted driving is any activity that could divert a person’s attention from the primary task of driving.
The most frequent distractions for drivers are caused by (what are they thinking!):

- **Cell phone use – hands-free is just as distracting as handheld**
- **Reaching for a moving object inside the vehicle**
- **Looking at an object or event outside the vehicle**
- **Reading**
- **Applying makeup**

9 out of 10 licensed drivers believe drivers talking on cell phones to be “somewhat” or “very” serious threat to their personal safety.  

More than 19 out of 20 surveyed adults believe texting, emailing or updated social media is an even more serious threat.  

90.3 percent reported that distracted drivers are “somewhat” or “much” bigger threat than they were three years ago.  

1 out of 3 respondents said they had read a text or email while driving.  

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Almost half – 47% of adults who use text messaging say they have sent or read messages while behind the wheel.  

NHTSA research shows that drivers under 25 are two to three times more likely to send or read a text message from behind the wheel and young passengers are the least likely to speak up if their driver is texting or talking on a cell phone. (Ray LaHood Fast Lane blog Nov. 2012)  

The AAA Foundation 2012 Traffic Safety Culture Index research showed that 16-24 year old drivers had the highest rates of self-reported texting, emailing, and social network checking behind the wheel. This group also had the lowest rates of disapproval for these behaviors and hand-held cell phone use while driving.  

**Texting while driving**

- Multiplies the chance of a crash 23 times (VTTI and NHTSA)  
- Is like driving after drinking 4 beers (NHTSA)  
- Is driving blind – during 5 seconds looking away from the road at 55 mph, your vehicle travels 400 feet—more than the length of a football field. At 35 mph, a vehicle will travel more than 50 feet per second; or almost half a football field in 3 seconds.