



APRIL

Division of Environmental Services

Safety message

...from the Division Chief

April 2014 is Distracted Driver Awareness Month.

For many of you, safety at home and safety at work is a top priority, and it should be. But what about safety to and from work or to and from home? Do you take the time to focus on making safety a priority when you're driving?

Each year distracted driving is responsible for a greater number of car crashes and a greater number of deaths on California's roadways. Drivers can be distracted by their cell phone, changing the radio or setting the navigation system.

There's no doubt that we are busy, often trying to create a balance between home and work. Unfortunately, many of us still believe in the myth that we can multi-task when we are driving. We make calls or send text messages or emails to keep up with work and our family commitments. We view a commute to work as an opportunity to return emails or communicate with co-workers. What we're really doing is putting ourselves and anyone on the road around us in danger. When we are driving and sending an email or text we increase our chance of a crash risk 23 times.

My message is simple, put your phone down when you are driving and focus on the road, on traffic, and your destination. You will be pleased with how much better and safely you drive when you're not distracted.

Sincerely,

Dean Messer, Chief
Division of Environmental Services

12 Deadliest Driving Distractions

1. Cell phone use (talking, listening, dialing, texting)
2. Generally distracted or "lost in thought"
3. Outside person, object or event (such as rubbernecking)
4. Other occupants (talking with or looking at other people in the car)
5. Using or reaching for a device brought into a vehicle (such as radar CDs, MP3 players, headphones, etc...)
6. Eating or drinking
7. Adjusting audio or climate controls
8. Adjusting vehicle devices/controls (mirrors, windows, door locks).
9. Moving objects in vehicle (pets, insects or cargo)
10. Reading, including maps
11. Grooming
12. Smoking-related (includes smoking, lighting up, putting ashes in the tray)

Distracted Driving Facts & Statistics

- The number of people killed in distraction-affected crashes decreased slightly from 3,360 in 2011 to 3,328 in 2012. An estimated 421,000 were injured in motor vehicle accidents involving a distracted driver. This was a nine percent increase from the estimated 387,000 people injured in 2011.
- Drivers talking on a cell phone are 4x more likely to have a car accident.
- Texting while driving slows your brake reaction speed by 18%.
- Answering a text takes away your attention for about five seconds. That is enough time to travel the length of a football field.
- At any given daylight moment across America, approximately 600,000 drivers are using cell phones or manipulating electronic devices while driving, a number that has stayed steady since 2010.
- Studies have found that **texting while driving causes a 400% increase** in time spent with eyes off the road.

Think Safety visit <http://swpsafety.water.ca.gov> for more information

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