

Kingsport Police Department

Press Release

General Information

Topic	Distracted Driving Education Campaign
Date Released	April 18, 2013

Narrative

Effective immediately, the Kingsport Police Department is launching a Distracted Driving Education Campaign.

During 2013 alone, K.P.D. has already investigated five fatal car crashes resulting in six fatalities. One of these deaths was a direct result of an individual texting while driving.

The Kingsport Police Department will be making a series of educational materials and videos on the topic of distracted driving available to the public via the following outlets:

- K.P.D.'s Website: www.Police.KingsportTN.gov
- K.P.D.'s Facebook Page: www.Facebook.com/KingsportPoliceDepartment
- K.P.D.'s YouTube Channel: www.youtube.com/user/KingsportPD
- Charter Communications Government Access Channel 16

K.P.D. also encourages area television and newspaper media to utilize their resources to help spread the word and educate the public concerning distracted driving.

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.

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](#).
- 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.
- Drivers who use hand-held devices are 4 times more likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves.
- Text messaging creates a crash risk 23 times worse than driving while not distracted.
- 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.
- Headset cell phone use is not substantially safer than hand-held use.
- Driving while using a cell phone reduces the amount of brain activity associated with driving by 37%.

In the State of Tennessee, while a vehicle is in motion, it is illegal for:

- Bus drivers to use a cell phone at all whatsoever (handheld or hands-free)
- Novice drivers to use a cell phone at all whatsoever (handheld or hands-free)
- All drivers to text while operating a motor vehicle

10 Tips for Managing Distractions While Driving

- 1) **Turn it off.** Turn your phone off or switch to silent mode before you get in the car.
- 2) **Spread the word.** Set up a special message to tell callers that you are driving and you'll get back to them as soon as possible, or sign up for a service that offers this.
- 3) **Pull over.** If you need to make a call, pull over to a safe area first.
- 4) **Use your passengers.** Ask a passenger to make the call for you.
- 5) **X the Text.** Don't ever text and drive, surf the web or read your email while driving. It is dangerous and against the law in most states.
- 6) **Know the law.** Familiarize yourself with state and local laws before you get in the car. Some states and localities prohibit the use of hand held cell phones.
- 7) **Prepare.** Review maps and directions before you start to drive. If you need help when you are on the road, ask a passenger to help or pull over to a safe location to review the map/directions again.
- 8) **Secure your pets.** Pets can be a big distraction in the car. Always secure your pets properly before you start to drive.
- 9) **Keep the kids safe.** Pull over to a safe location to address situations with your children in the car.
- 10) **Focus on the task at hand.** Refrain from smoking, eating, drinking, reading and any other activity that takes your mind and eyes off the road.

For additional information on distracted driving, please visit these websites:

- www.Distracton.gov
- www.TNTrafficSafety.org
- www.GHSA.org

Or contact:

Ptl. Thomas M. Patton

K.P.D. Community Relations and Crime Prevention Unit

[423-229-9433](tel:423-229-9433)

ThomasMPatton@KingsportTN.gov

Releasing Officer

Ptl. Thomas M. Patton

K.P.D. Community Relations & Crime Prevention Unit