

Distracted Driving: Can We Legislate the Problem Away?

Lifesavers Conference
Nashville, TN April 1, 2009

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INSURANCE INSTITUTE
FOR HIGHWAY SAFETY



IIHS Automotive News, May 1, 2006

What is driver distraction?

"A grave problem that developed in New Hampshire... now has all the motor-vehicle commissioners of the eastern states in a wax. It's whether radios should be allowed on cars. Some states don't want to permit them at all - say they distract the driver and disturb the peace...The [Massachusetts] commissioner thinks the things should be shut off while you are driving...The whole problem is getting very complex, but the upshot is that you'll probably be allowed to take your radio anywhere, with possibly some restriction on the times when you can play it."

Nicholas Trott in 1930 as cited by Goodman et al., 1997

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Concerns about driver distraction are not new. Distraction is a factor in 25% of highway crashes, according to the US Department of Transportation.

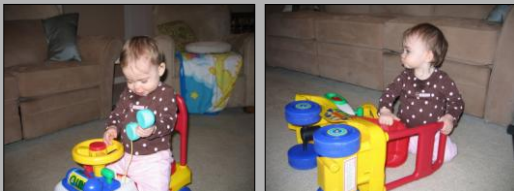


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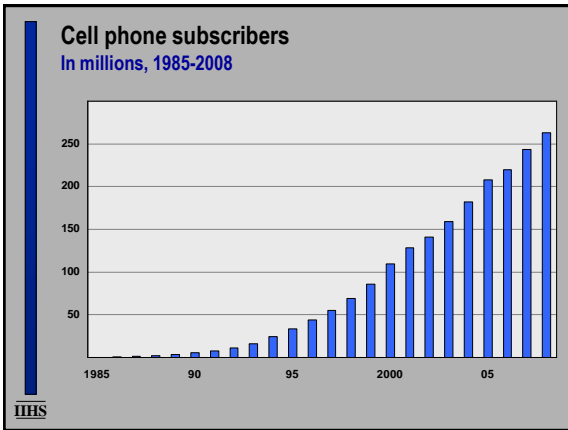
The mobile lifestyle is alive and well

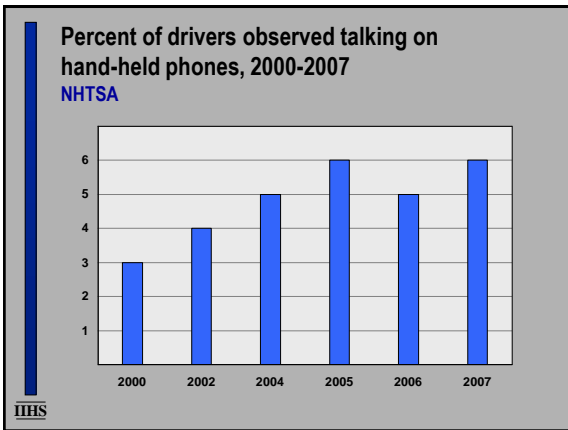
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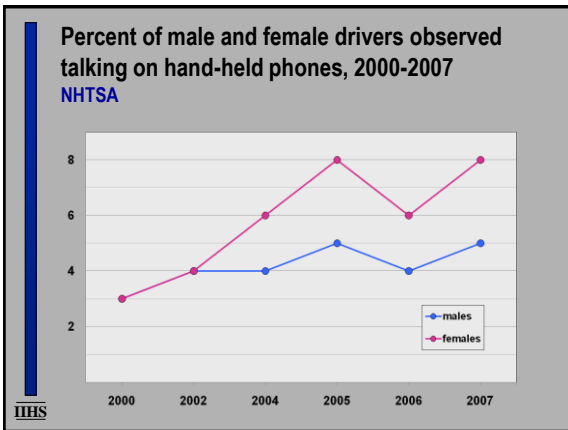
In-vehicle cellphones
The next generation



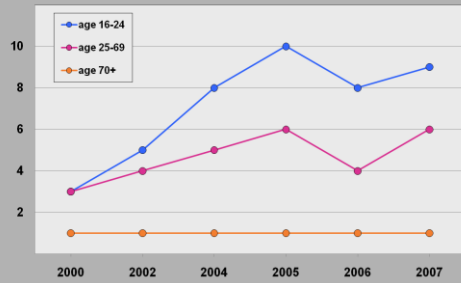
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Percent of drivers observed talking on hand-held phones by age, 2000-2007
NHTSA



Driving While Distracted Survey
Nationwide Insurance, April 2008

- ◆ Phone survey of 1,500 drivers ages 16-61
- ◆ 98 percent believe they are safe drivers
- ◆ 72 percent admit to driving while doing other tasks
- ◆ 64 percent of cellphone owners feel they are expected to be available by cellphone at all times

Driving While Distracted Survey
Results by age

	16-17	18-30	31-44	45-61
percent multi-task while driving	60	78	80	65
percent of cell phone owners who talk on phone while driving	62	89	88	74
percent of cell phone owners who text while driving	36	39	15	4

**How does phone use affect crash risk?
Is there sufficient basis for legislation?**

Cellphones and crash risk

- ◆ Police crash reports do not reliably document drivers' phone use
- ◆ Two controlled studies link talking on a phone directly to involvement in a crash
 - Crash-involved driver cellphone use verified from phone billing records
 - Canadian study found 4-fold increased risk of property-damage crashes when talking on phone
 - Study of Australian drivers found 4-fold increased risk of injury crash when talking of phone

IIHS study of injury crash risk associated with phone use Western Australia, 2005

- ◆ Talking on phone associated with fourfold increase in risk of injury crash
- ◆ Increased risk similar for males and females, for drivers 30+ and younger than 30, and for hands-free and hand-held phones
- ◆ Risk could not be estimated for different types of hands-free phones; only a few voice-activated phones
- ◆ Ban on hand-held phone use didn't eliminate use or prevent crashes; one-third of calls used hand-held phones

International laws on driving and cellphone use

European Union

- ◆ Hand-held phone use banned in most E.U. countries

Australia

- ◆ Hand-held phone use banned in all states

Canada

- ◆ Hand-held phone use banned in Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Quebec

Japan

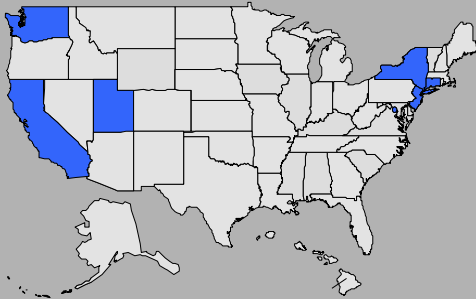
- ◆ Hand-held phone use banned in Japan

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Cellphone bans

March 2009

- Statewide hand-held ban
- Teenage drivers
- School bus drivers
- By local jurisdiction

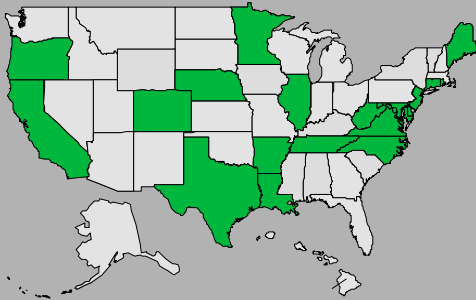


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Cellphone bans

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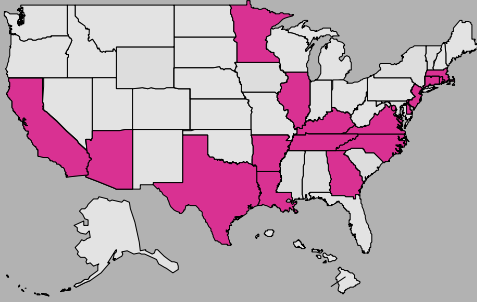
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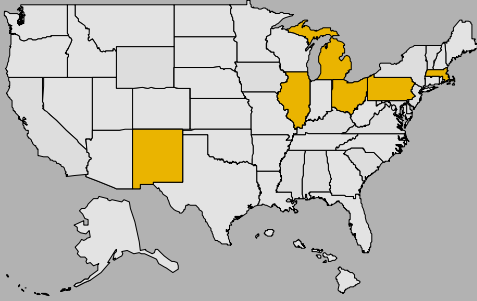
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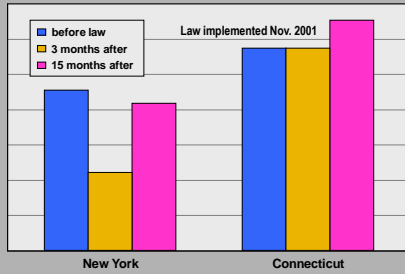
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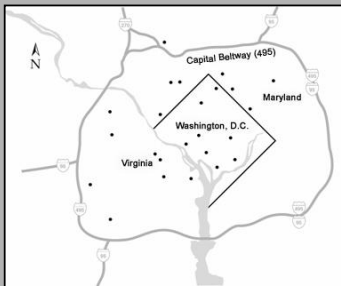


What are effects of laws limiting drivers' hand-held phone use?

Percentage of drivers using hand-held cellphones before and after New York law
 Connecticut and New York

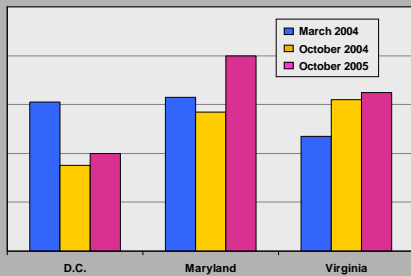


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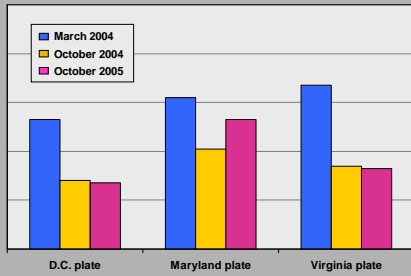
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Percentage of drivers using hand-held phones
 Washington, D.C., metro area



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Percentage of drivers using hand-held phones in Washington, D.C.
 By jurisdiction of license plate



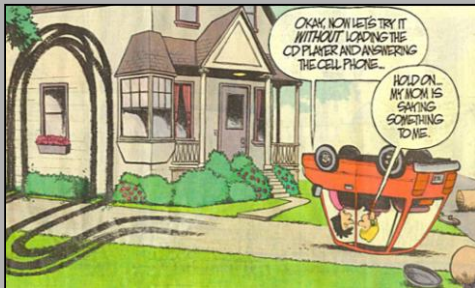
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Conclusions

- ◆ Declines in hand-held phone use dissipated in New York but largely persisted in DC
- ◆ Enforcement appeared stronger in DC: cellphone citations were 8 percent of all citations for moving violations in DC, compared to 4 percent in New York
- ◆ Media coverage of both laws declined after implementation; DC drivers may have been affected by media coverage of risks associated with phone use
- ◆ No sustained publicized enforcement campaign in either DC or New York

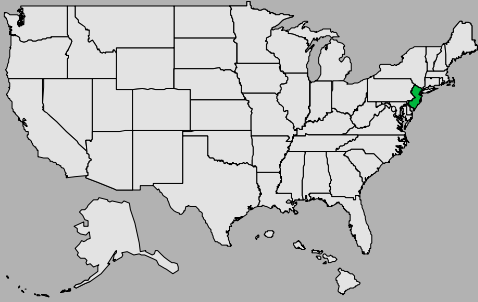
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Zitz
 By Jerry Scott and Jim Borgman



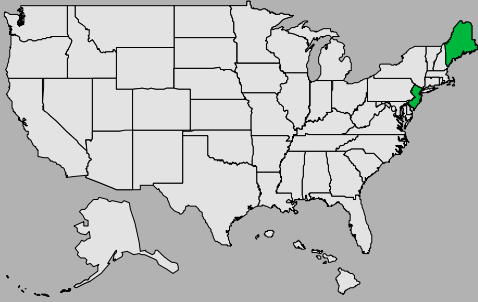
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Cellphone bans for teenage drivers
2002



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Cellphone bans for teenage drivers
2003



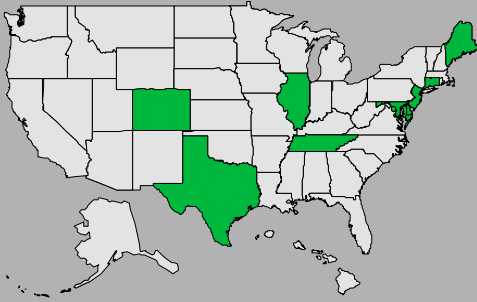
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Cellphone bans for teenage drivers
2004



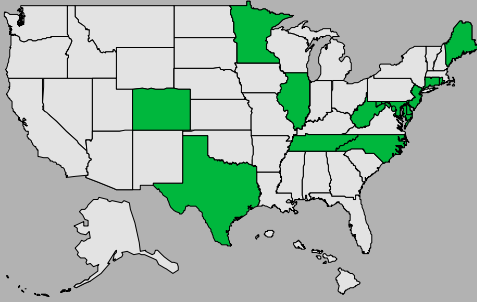
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Cellphone bans for teenage drivers
2005



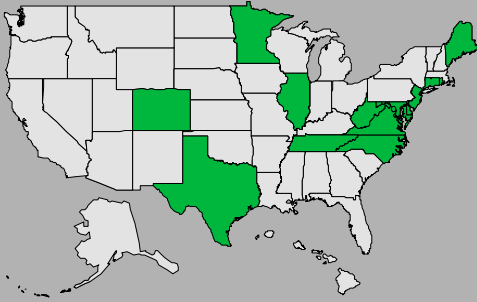
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Cellphone bans for teenage drivers
2006



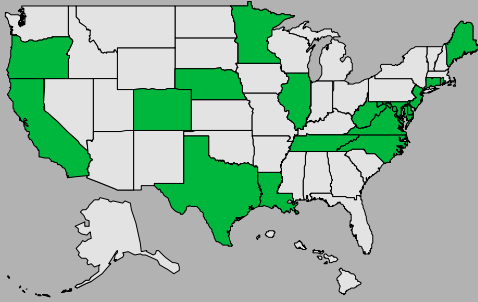
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Cellphone bans for teenage drivers
2007



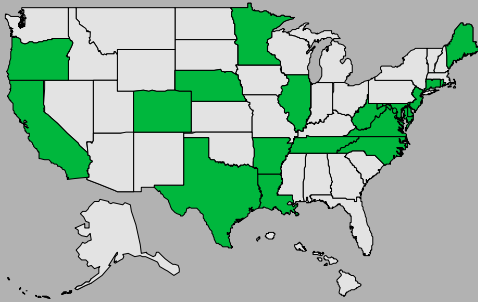
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Cellphone bans for teenage drivers
2008



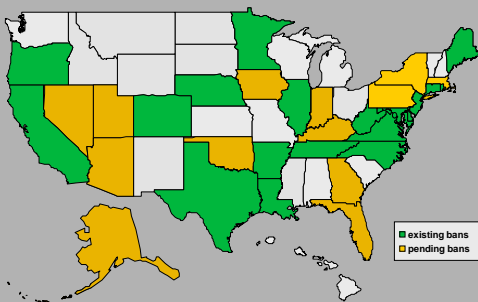
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Cellphone bans for teenage drivers
2009



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Cellphone bans for teenage drivers
Existing and pending, March 2009

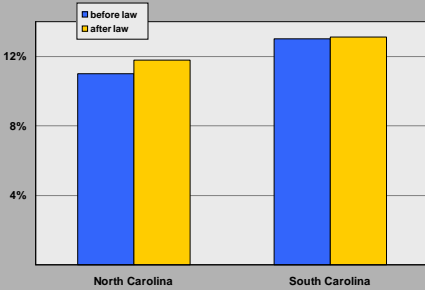


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North Carolina's cellphone restriction for teen drivers
Effective December 1, 2006

- ◆ Prohibits use of any telecommunications device including text messaging by drivers younger than 18
- ◆ Levies \$25 fine and 6-month delay before advancing to next licensing level
- ◆ Excludes calls for emergencies or to parents, guardians, or spouses

Teenage drivers observed using cellphones as they left school at the end of the day



Teenage drivers observed using cellphones in North Carolina in post-law survey
By type of phone

	percent
holding phone to ear	9
hands free	< 1
dialing	2
texting/gaming/camera	< 1
total phone use	12

Parents' and teenagers' views about cellphone law and parental restrictions

After law

	teenagers	parents
know about law	64%	39%
approve of law	74%	95%
believe law being enforced fairly often/a lot	22%	13%
if teenager has cellphone, parent restricts teenager's phone use while driving	66%	88%

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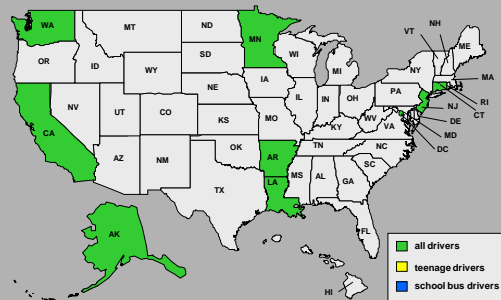
Conclusions

- ◆ Cellphone use increases crash risk, and the risk is similar for hand-held and hands-free phones
- ◆ Laws targeting teenage drivers' phone use are difficult for police officers to enforce
- ◆ Parents also may find cellphone restrictions harder to enforce than nighttime driving or other restrictions
- ◆ Primary enforcement laws applying to all phones and all drivers make most sense, based on evidence
- ◆ Passage of laws is the first step, but compliance will likely be low without publicized enforcement
- ◆ Effects of laws on crashes unknown

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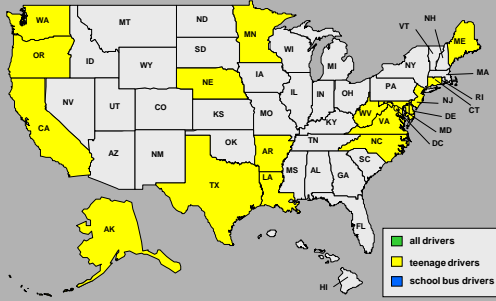
Texting bans

March 2009

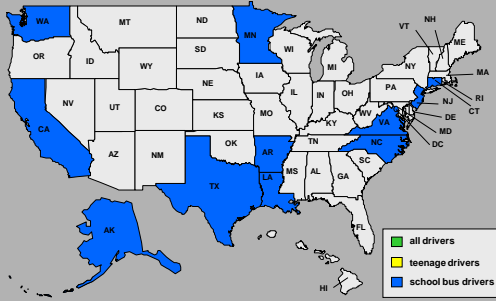


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Texting bans March 2009



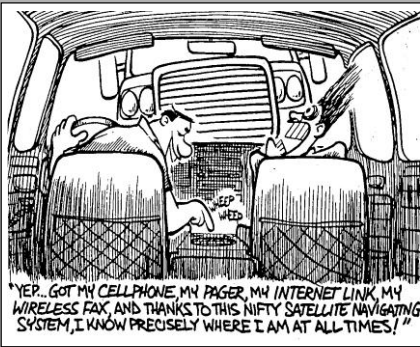
Texting bans March 2009



What is the evidence on the risks and prevalence of texting?

- ◆ A UK simulator study found that 17-24-year-old texting drivers had slower reaction times and drifted from lane more often
- ◆ An Australian simulator study found 18-21 year-old texting drivers were less able to maintain lane position and to detect and respond to traffic signs
- ◆ 18-28% of mobile phone users admit to driving while texting (Vlingo survey and Nationwide survey)

What about other distracting technologies?



Ft. Lauderdale, FL, Sun-Sentinel

In-car internet access

The Connected Car is now a Wi-Fi hotspot

Caution: Driver May Be Surfing the Web

Detroit Free Press
The Connected Car is now a Wi-Fi hotspot

InformationWeek
Microsoft Offers In-Car Internet Search Service To Automakers

The New York Times
Caution: Driver May Be Surfing the Web

July 30, 2008

A worrisome trend is the increased availability of after-market systems permitting drivers to view DVDs, TV broadcasts, etc., on video screens.



DVD unit plays role in Kenai crash case

MURDER TRIAL: Prosecutors say driver was watching a movie.

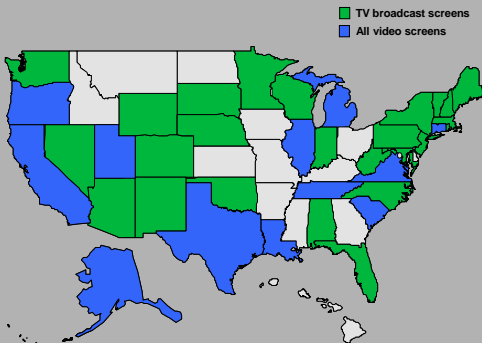
NO HUMAN ERROR

Kenai, Ala. (AP) — The 37-year-old Peterson Jr. was watching a movie while driving his truck two years ago when he slammed head-on into a dump on the forward highway in a fiery wreck that killed two people.

And even if the state can prove the 29-year-old Kenai man was watching the movie "From Trip" on his in-truck DVD player while driving at highway speeds — an allegation Peterson denies — does such behavior constitute "an extreme indifference to the value of human life," demanding a minimum 10-year prison sentence?

That's one of the questions surrounding a murder trial that began this week in Kenai and is said by industry experts and lawyers to be the first case in the country in which a DVD player is implicated in a fatal wreck resulting in the driver being charged with murder. The questions and trial date were

Bans on video screens visible to driver March 2009



In-vehicle video screens