

Distracted Driving Track:

01. Our Need to Stay Connected: What Challenges does this Present to the Traffic Safety Community?

For years some have referred to a Blackberry device as their "crackberry." In the recent NTSB recommendation to ban all wireless devices from vehicles, the Chair, Deborah Hersman likened distracted driving to smoking because of its seemingly addictive nature. Unlike other risky driving activities, the ability of electronic communication technology to enable drivers to connect with others makes the devices and the activity socially acceptable and even encouraged. This dynamic may suggest new strategies will be required to mitigate their use in vehicles. This session will include an overview from NHTSA on their December, 2011 National Survey on Distracted Driving Attitudes and Behaviors, and presentations from two behavioral and neurological researchers about their findings in this important area, and suggestions for practitioners dealing with changing driver behavior.

02. How Can Engineering and Technology Prevent Distracted Driving?

Small entrepreneurs, large technology providers and wireless carriers are introducing consumer products to help ordinary drivers mitigate distraction caused by wireless device use. This session will include experts in the field who will discuss various engineering and technology countermeasures designed to prevent distracted driving. NHTSA will present new voluntary guidelines for minimizing the distraction potential of in-vehicle devices.

03. Enlisting Employers in the Effort to Stop Distracted Driving

Many employers are implementing cell phone driving policies for their employee drivers. This session will examine 1) the current landscape of private, state and local government employer policies; 2) the recent FMCSA rule governing cell phone use in commercial vehicles; 3) how organizations have successfully implemented policies; and 4) what tools are available to traffic safety practitioners to encourage and assist with employer policy implementation and risk exposure for companies without policies.

04. Distracted Driving, Legislation, Law Enforcement and Penalties

Passing and enforcing responsible legislation is one key strategy in addressing distracted driving. This session will look at efforts across the U.S. to pass and enforce texting bans, cell phone bans, and other distracted driving legislation. We will hear about NHTSA's high visibility enforcement pilots and share enforcement strategies for passenger and commercial motor vehicles from communities across the country.

05. What Does the Research Say about Cognitive Distraction and its Role in Crashes? Why do Researchers Come to Different Conclusions on This Important Issue?

There is disagreement among researchers and others within the distracted driving debate about the role of cognitive distraction and the use of hands free devices in crash causation. This session will examine the strengths and limitations of simulator, epidemiological and naturalistic methodologies for examining distracted driving crash causation. Panelists will include researchers from each of the three methodologies. There will be a moderated debate with pre-submitted questions and questions from the audience. Attendees will come away with a better understanding of what role specific research can and should play in their decision making process.