



# **Mental Health and Recovery Services Board**

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Put Your Phone Away or Get Ready to Pay**

Admit it, you have probably seen someone texting while driving. You may even be guilty of distracted driving yourself. With so many people constantly tuned in to their phones, texting from behind the wheel is a killer on our roadways.

According to AAA, distracted driving contributes to 16 percent of all fatal crashes, leading to around 5,000 deaths per year. Approximately 660,000 drivers use cell phones while driving daily. That creates enormous potential for deaths and injuries on U.S. roads.

Teens were the largest age group reported as distracted at the time of fatal crashes. Nearly one out of ten drivers 15 to 19 years old involved in fatal crashes were reported as being distracted at the time of the crash. This age group has the largest proportion of drivers who were distracted at the time of fatal crashes.

Distracted driving is not just texting; it is any activity that diverts attention from driving. This includes talking or texting on your phone, eating and drinking, talking to people in the vehicle, fiddling with the stereo or navigation system – basically anything that takes your attention away from safe driving.

Texting is the most alarming distraction. Sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for five seconds. At 55 mph, that is like driving the length of a football field with your eyes closed. You cannot drive safely unless the task of driving has your full attention.

We can save lives by ending distracted driving.

- Do not follow the pack, be a leader. When you get behind the wheel, be an example to your family and friends by putting away your phone.
- Speak up when you see a friend or family member driving while distracted.
- Listen to your passengers; if they catch you texting while driving and tell you to put your phone away, put it down.

Texting while driving is dangerous and getting caught can be expensive. Save your money, and maybe save a life – your text message can wait.

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