

# Biggest danger behind the wheel

Billions of car trips are taken across North America each year, and though only a small percentage involve people driving under the influence, even one impaired driver can cause a great deal of trouble on the roadways. Drunk, drugged and distracted driving is responsible for thousands of fatalities and accidents each and every year -- with distracted driving now leading the pack as one of the biggest contributors to vehicular fatalities. Mothers Against Drunk Driving notes that someone is killed in a drunk driving crash every 53 minutes in the United States, while every 90 seconds someone is injured because of a drunk driver. Though driving under the influence poses a threat to everyone on the road, drunk driving is no longer the biggest risk behind the wheel. Distracted driving is a growing problem, one spurred on by the increase of technological gadgets that take drivers' attention away from the road.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says driving a vehicle while texting is six times more dangerous than driving while intoxicated. The agency reports that texting while driving has now replaced drinking while driving as the leading cause of accidents and deaths of teenage drivers. But it's not a problem only reserved for youngsters. People of all ages admit to texting while behind the wheel of a car. According to a Harvard Center for Risk Analysis study, texting in cars and trucks causes more than 3,000 deaths and 330,000 injuries per year. To illustrate just how dangerous texting while driving can be in relation to driving while intoxicated, Car and Driver Magazine performed an experiment. During the test, cars were set up with a red light to alert drivers when to brake. The magazine tested how long it would take to hit the brakes when sober, when legally impaired at a BAC level of .08,

when reading an e-mail, and when sending a text. The results were surprising. Sober, focused drivers took an average of 0.54 seconds to brake. Legally drunk drivers required four additional feet to stop. An additional 36 feet was necessary when reading an e-mail and an additional 70 feet was needed when sending a text. Drivers who text also are more likely to drift in and out of lanes. A study by the Transport Research Laboratory in London found that reaction times for texting drivers were 35 percent worse than those for drivers with no distractions. Although the proportion of alcohol-



related traffic crashes has dropped considerably in recent years, the number of accidents and fatalities attributed to causes other than impaired driving have increased. A survey by Nationwide Insurance found that 80 percent of drivers support some type of mobile phone or texting use restrictions while driving.



**HAND OVER YOUR KEYS.**

*Hold On to What Matters.*

Drinking and driving can take away everything that matters most to you:  
**your freedom, your job,  
 your reputation, your future  
 and even your life.**

Make a commitment to yourself and others to drive sober this season.

This important reminder is brought to you by:

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# WARNING:

**Drinking and Driving Can Cause Loss of License, Financial Penalty, Imprisonment, Serious Injury and DEATH.**



Don't let prom and graduation time end in disaster. We urge you to drive safely and responsibly.

## COTTAGE GROVE POLICE DEPARTMENT

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