



TEXTING WHILE DRIVING: A Fatal Combination

Would you close your eyes for five seconds while driving?

Most drivers involved in crashes while texting, had their eyes off the road for only about five seconds.

According to the Department of Transportation, there is a growing epidemic of car crashes that can be attributed to texting while driving. As cell phone use has increased over the years, the number of injuries and fatalities due to distracted driving has climbed along with it. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, distracted driving caused the deaths of nearly 5,500 people in 2009, and injured a half million more.

Distracted driving includes anything a driver may do that takes his or her attention away from the road. Eating, talking to passengers, reading, and even using a navigation system all increase the likelihood of being involved in a crash. Each of these actions causes the driver either to take his eyes off the road remove his hands from the wheel, or become

BEWARE: Law enforcement will now check your phone records to see if you were using a cell phone at the time of an accident in which you were involved. In the case of a fatality, you may be charged with murder. In addition, insurance companies are now subpoenaing cell phone records of individuals involved in accidents to see if they were on the phone at the time of the accident.

distracted. Drivers who text while driving are doing all these actions at the same time.

Texting involves using eyes, hands, and mind. It is no coincidence therefore, that texting is considered the most dangerous distraction of all. In fact, studies have shown that texting is far more dangerous than driving drunk. While driving drunk increases the likelihood of a crash by four times, texting while driving increases the likelihood by eight times. It only takes seconds, too. Most drivers involved in crashes while they were texting had taken their eyes off the road for less than five seconds.

Nearly all states have laws prohibiting the use of handheld cell phones while driving. In New York and New Jersey, texting is considered a primary offense, which means that a police officer can pull over a driver if he sees him or her texting. New York drivers face fines of up to \$150 plus surcharges, while in New Jersey the fine is anywhere between \$100 and \$250.

Consider how many families are torn apart by senseless, preventable, crashes. No message or phone call is worth the risk. When you get in your car, buckle up, and put your cell phone in the glove compartment. n