Can I Have Your Attention?
Dropping Distracted Driving Through Policy, Engagement and Enforcement
Acronym Alert!

BTSCRP = Behavioral Traffic Safety Cooperative Research Program

Get involved!

• Submit problem statements
• Serve on an expert panel
• Serve as an expert panel “monitor” (GHSA State Members only)
• Bid to conduct research (Associate Members/researchers only)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUSo89BLRcl
Project Objectives

- Examine current U.S. state and Canadian provincial electronic device use legislation
- Evaluate the benefits of and impediments to enacting, enforcing, and adjudicating electronic device legislation
- Develop model legislation and educational materials for stakeholders
Strategies Used to Enact or Revise an Electronic Device Use

1. Building a coalition or team of stakeholders
   - Invite groups with opposing opinions to encourage the exchange of ideas

2. Starting with a basic texting law and adding more rigorous clauses

3. Adopting local ordinances
Sharing Best Practices
Materials Developed

- Informative Webinar for Practitioners
- Model Legislation
- Presentation for Different Stakeholders
- Law Enforcement Presentation
- Highlight Document for Legislators
- Model Press Release
Promote Legislation to Reduce Distracted Driving

Distracted driving is a major public health and safety concern. An estimated 2,841 people were killed in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers in 2018. Distracted driving is underreported and is likely a contributing cause in far more fatal crashes. Dialing, texting, and browsing the internet on electronic devices are some of the most common distractions while driving. Studies show that engaging in these behaviors while driving is extremely risky. It takes about five seconds, on average, to read or send a text. In that time span, when a driver’s eyes are on a device and not on the road, a vehicle traveling at 55 miles per hour can travel the length of a football field.

Why We Need a Stronger Law

Constituents want a stronger law

63% said they were more afraid of distracted drivers than drunk drivers.

A majority of drivers support laws restricting distracted driving, with almost 70% supporting a law against holding and talking on a cellphone and 68% supporting a law against reading, typing, or sending a text while driving.

Stronger laws can prevent injuries and save money

Distracted driving laws have resulted in significant reductions in motor vehicle crash-related emergency department visits.

Stronger laws may increase funding for traffic safety initiatives

Section 405 of the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, the National Priority Safety Program, provides funding to address selected national priorities for reducing highway crashes and injuries. Specifically, 8.5% of 405 funds (called 405D) are earmarked for distracted driving grants. To have access to the funds, states must enact and enforce a prohibition on texting as well as a ban on the use of all electronic devices for all drivers aged 16 and younger, plus meet additional requirements.

Eligible states can use 53% of the 405D funds for Section 405 purposes, which include a broader range of traffic safety initiatives, such as drug- and alcohol-impaired driving. The FAST Act also allows states with distracted driving data conforming to the most recent Model Minimum Uniform Crash Criteria (MMUCC) to use 75% of the funds for Section 405 purposes.

Developing A Model Press Release on Deterring Electronic Device Use While Driving

This document is organized such that it:

- Provides key components for you to consider when developing outreach messages.
- Includes sample press releases or outreach messages organized by the type of agency and by topic. Supplement this sample text with your organization-specific information.
- Has hyperlinks to 2019 and 2013 press releases on distracted driving that you can use as references.

KEY COMPONENTS OF OUTREACH MESSAGES

When developing outreach messages, it is important that you use various media outlets to deliver messages on distracted driving because doing so broadens the audience and the reach of the message. You might consider the following methods:

- Press releases
- Public service announcements (PSAs) for television and radio broadcast
- Social media posts

The content of the message should incorporate the following:

Relevant Timing

- The message should coincide with an event, such as Distracted Driving Awareness Month, a revision to the legislation, an upcoming enforcement effort, the start of a public information and education campaign, or reporting on a crash involving distracted driving.

Compelling Headline

- The headline should be direct and informative and should grab the audience’s attention. It should also be brief, keeping in mind the character limits of different distribution platforms (e.g., Twitter: 140 characters; Google: 60 characters; Facebook: 40 characters). The headline should be information rich and understandable; make sure to include keywords, and depending on the platform, consider the use of hashtags.

Informative Introductory Sentences

- Include who, what, where, when, and why in the first few sentences of the message. The remaining content should support the information.

DEVELOPING A MODEL PRESS RELEASE ON DETERRING ELECTRONIC DEVICE USE WHILE DRIVING

Customized Tone and Talking Points

- Tailor the message so that it resonates with the target audience. Use a theme and language that the audience will clearly understand. For example, for towns, it is best to use social media with hashtags, photos, and current slang, with a more rural/small town, it might be appropriate to present a more community-oriented message.
- Modify the message so it reflects the agency conveying it. For example, certain messages will more appropriately come from law enforcement, others from practitioners, and others from safety advocates.

Use of Quotations as Support

- Supplement the facts with supporting quotes. A driving quote can make the messages more compelling and can add a personal or emotional angle. The quote can come from a variety of sources, including law enforcement, highway safety office representatives, victim advocates, members of the community, etc.

A Clear Call to Action

- Have a goal in mind when developing the message and clearly state what you want the audience to take away from the information. Provide hyperlinks to additional information as well as contact information for sources that can answer follow-up questions.

Limits on Length

- Keep the message brief to reduce the risk of losing the audience’s attention. Typically stay between 400 and 600 words for a press release, and shorter for other types of social media (Twitter, Instagram).

Use of Multimedia, When Possible

- Enliven the message by adding, when possible, multimedia elements such as photos, videos, and infographics.

SAMPLE TEXT AND TALKING POINTS FOR PRESS RELEASES

The bullets below provide potential sample text that can be customized for different types of media outlets and talking points related to the use of electronic devices while driving. The talking points are organized by the type of agency and information being conveyed by the message.

Include additional information to customize this text for your agency, for example, details about your outreach or enforcement program (e.g., types of activities, length of time), quotes from agency representatives, agency contact information, and links to additional resources.

EXAMPLES OF PREVIOUS ARTICLES AND PRESS RELEASES

Below are links to articles and press releases on the topic of distracted driving:

- Drive It and Drive Infographic: Twitter, January 23, 2020
- Survey: Most of Central Oregon Distracted on the Road — And It’s Killing Us: October 8, 2019
- Distracted Driving Campaign in Region: August 1 – July 31, 2019
- Sample Social Media Posts: April 2019
Download the report from:

Lead Researcher:

Amy K. Benedick, PMP. | Senior Study Director
Westat, 1600 Research Blvd, Rockville, MD 20850
amybenedick@westat.com
Distracted Driving in Georgia

Percentage of time spent distracted while driving

Georgia hands-free law begins

GHSA 2021
# NCOIL Distracted Driving Model Act

Bipartisan, unanimous adoption - April 18, 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BTSCR</th>
<th>NCOIL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Recommends using “electronic device” to include a broad range of electronic and computerized devices. It would also cover upcoming technologies not yet adopted.**<br>**Recommends that the law should be in effect at all times and on all roads**<br>**Recommends that the language clearly state the behaviors that cannot be engaged in, including:**<br>• Hold or support an electronic device with any part of his/her body.<br>• Use the electronic device to manually dial numbers or input text, engage in multiple swipes and/or taps. This includes when the device is used hands-free (mounted, affixed, or resting somewhere in the vehicle).<br>• Use an electronic device to stream, record, or broadcast video. This includes when the device is used hands-free (mounted, affixed, or resting somewhere in the vehicle).<br>• Use the electronic device or applications on the device that display motion on the device’s screen, with the exception of a global positioning system (GPS) or navigational software. This includes when the device is used hands-free (mounted, affixed, or resting somewhere in the vehicle). | **NCOIL Model uses “stand alone electronic device.”**<br>**NCOIL model complies and is in effect at all times “While operating a motor vehicle on any street, highway, or property open to the public for vehicular traffic in this state”**<br>**NCOIL Model Section (4)(D)**<br>**In regards to penalties and fines, the BTSCR recommends that:**<br>• Fines should be in line with other traffic safety laws in the same jurisdiction, as this practice has been found to increase public support for the law. Incremental fines should be in place for subsequent violations.<br>• Penalties for distracted driving should also be in line with other serious traffic offenses in the state | **NCOIL Model Section (5) covers penalties and includes a drafting note “DRAFTING NOTE: States should consider aligning property damage, injury, and/or death with equivalent driver intoxication offenses and penalties.”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BTSCR</th>
<th>NCOIL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In regards to penalties and fines, the BTSCR recommends that</strong></td>
<td><strong>NCOIL Model Section (5) covers penalties and includes a drafting note “DRAFTING NOTE: States should consider aligning property damage, injury, and/or death with equivalent driver intoxication offenses and penalties.”</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Driving blind
The real story about distracted driving

In September 2020, Nationwide’s SmartRide® mobile app started showing drivers when and where they were driving while distracted by their phones. In less than a year, feedback from the app is making drivers more aware of their distractions, helping them to be safer drivers.

Drivers take their eyes off the road 13 times a day, for 6 seconds at a time, driving at 45 miles per hour, traveling the distance of a football field.

Distraction trends uncovered are alarming

4pm - 7pm
The most distracted time

45 mph
The speed at which most distractions occur

Friday
The most distracted day

6 seconds
The average time spent tapping screens

Most drivers are driving while distracted

Over 70%
of SmartRide® mobile drivers were distracted while driving at least once a day

45%
of every trip taken contained at least one distraction

SmartRide® technology is changing behaviors
In less than a year, SmartRide® distracted driving feedback has seen:

• A nearly 10% reduction in every day hand-held distractions among these drivers

• An 8% reduction in the distraction of each trip

To make our roads safer, Nationwide supports hands-free/primary enforcement laws in all 50 states.
Monthly Road Fatalities (12 month rolling average) - NSW, Rest of Australia and NSW Camera Detected Mobile Phone Offence Notices Issued

NSW road fatalities down 17%

57 fewer road deaths in NSW since start of phone enforcement program compared with the 2018/2019 average

Notes:
- Warning letters rather than penalty notices were issued Dec 2019 to March 2020
- Road fatality statistics from BITRE
- Issued notice counts from Revenue NSW
- Warning letter counts from TINSW media release

Lack of overall improvement in the other states and territories
Work Zone Assessment - Missouri
An average of 6.5 percent (753) drivers were illegally engaged with their mobile phone – either holding their phone to their ear or in one hand or two hands. This is over twice the reported average from the National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS)
## Work Zone Assessment - Missouri

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concurrent Offenses</th>
<th># Vehicles</th>
<th>% of Drivers Engaging in Concurrent Offenses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distracted &amp; Speeding</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distracted &amp; Non-belt Use</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-belt Use &amp; Speeding</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Concurrent Offenses/Violations per Time Interval

- **11:30**: 66 violations (3 violations), 78 violations (2 violations)
- **13:30**: 93 violations (3 violations), 99 violations (2 violations)
- **15:30**: 119 violations (3 violations), 78 violations (2 violations)
- **17:30**: 28 violations (2 violations), 12 violations (2 violations)
- **19:30**: 12 violations (2 violations), 15 violations (2 violations)
- **21:30**: 12 violations (2 violations), 12 violations (2 violations)
- **23:30**: 6 violations (2 violations), 28 violations (2 violations)
- **1:30**: 28 violations (2 violations), 12 violations (2 violations)
- **3:30**: 28 violations (2 violations), 12 violations (2 violations)
- **5:30**: 28 violations (2 violations), 12 violations (2 violations)

Legend:
- **3 violations**
- **2 violations**
### Work Zone Assessment - Missouri

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speed</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;5mph</td>
<td>3,832</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;10mph</td>
<td>2,167</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;15mph</td>
<td>862</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;20mph</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seat Belt Use</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unbelted</td>
<td>924</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Speed Limit:** 50 mph; **Total vehicles:** 11,520
Heads-Up Real Time Demonstration