

Driver distraction

Accidents caused by distractions while driving are not a new phenomenon, but as more devices are used by drivers, the risk of having an accident has greatly increased. The cell phone has drawn particular attention in recent years.

Many states and jurisdictions now prohibit drivers from using hand-held phones while driving. While the hands-free approach may seem like an obvious solution to cell phone-related safety problems, it presumes that crashes caused by cell phone use result primarily from dialing, from having only one hand on the wheel, or from reaching for, holding, or dropping a phone. Although these factors certainly contribute to the crash picture, studies suggest that conversation itself is the most prevalent single behavior associated with cell phone-related crashes.

Though the cell phone has drawn special attention recently, any distraction can be a potential hazard to a driver. Here are some tips to avoiding distractions while driving:

Before driving

- Familiarize yourself with the vehicle controls (radio, wipers, lights, etc.).
- Do not leave loose articles in the vehicle that may slide around while you're driving.
- Adjust mirrors.
- Prepare in advance for things you may need while you are driving like sunglasses, toll money, or other items.
- Make as many adjustments as possible like seat position, radio, temperature volume, windows, etc.
- Take care of personal hygiene (e.g., shaving, putting on make-up, etc.) prior to driving.

- Make sure you are well rested.
- Take care of phone calls, eating, or other activities prior to driving.
- Know your route before you leave.

While operating a vehicle

- Drive defensively. Remember, you need to compensate for the actions of other drivers.
- Do not eat or drink.
- Do not read or write anything.
- Avoid smoking.
- Do not use communications devices (e.g., cell phones), except in an emergency.
- Do not engage in distracting conversations.

Take a break

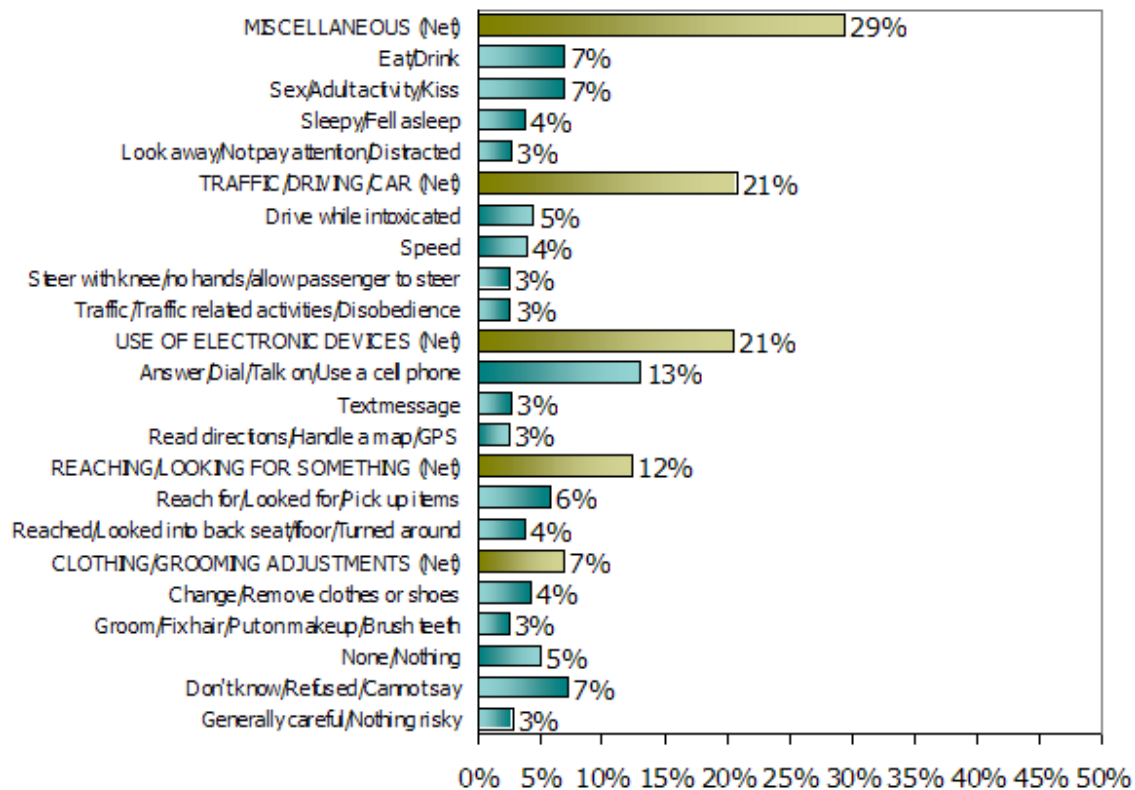
- If you feel your concentration is impaired or something is distracting you, park the vehicle in a safe location and take a break. Get out of the vehicle at a safe location, walk around, and stretch.
- If you need to make a phone call or receive an important phone call, pull over and make that call from the parked car.

Keep both hands on the steering wheel at all times and keep your mind on driving!

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Driver distraction (continued)

Most risky things done in a moving car



Driving actions

