



# **DISTRACTED DRIVING AWARENESS**

***Understanding Cognitive Distraction &  
Strategies for Reducing Its Risk***

**September 2019**

# OBJECTIVES

- Increase awareness about cognitive distraction.
- Prompt changes in behavior.
- Promote safe and successful habits.



**Distracted Driving...**

**is it an epidemic?**

**is it a pandemic?**

# DISTRACTED DRIVING FACTS

- Each day in the U.S., approximately **9** people are killed and more than **1,000** are injured in crashes that are reported to involve a distracted driver.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

- In 2017, **3,166** people were killed in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

# DISTRACTED DRIVING FACTS

- Individuals who drive while sending or reading text messages are **23 times** more likely to be involved in a car crash than drivers who do not text and drive.

(Virginia Tech Transportation Institute)



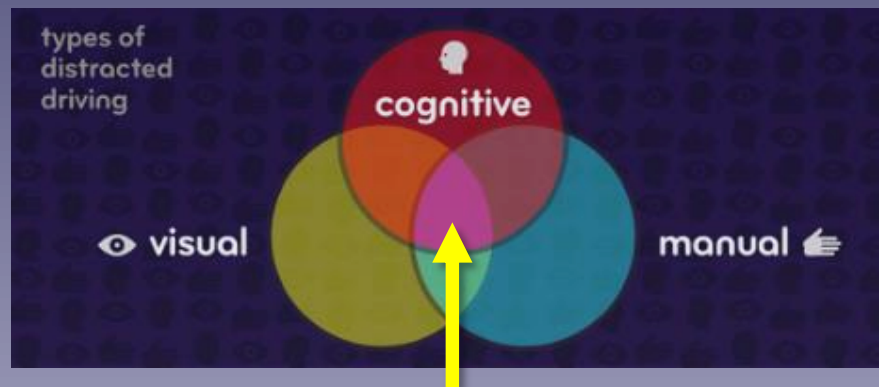
# DISTRACTED DRIVING FACTS

- A crash typically happens within an average of **3 seconds** after a driver is distracted.  
(U.S. Department of Transportation)
- **Five seconds** is the average time a driver's eyes are off the road while texting. The distance covered in **5 seconds** of driving at 55 mph is equivalent to the length of a football field.  
(Virginia Tech Transportation Institute)
- **Remember the video of rearend crash?**

# TYPES OF DISTRACTED DRIVING

What are the three main types?

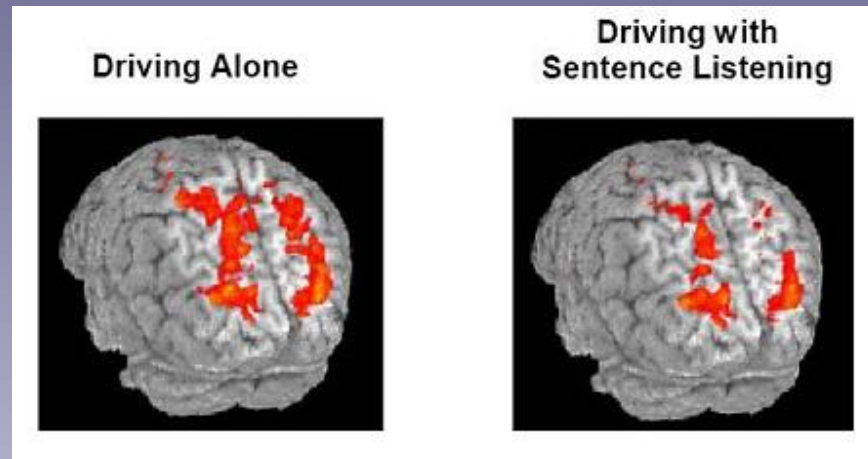
- **Visual** – Looking at GPS devices, radios, etc.
- **Manual** – Eating/drinking, adjusting, reaching.
- **Cognitive** – Mental distractions such as phone calls.



- Texting is especially dangerous because it combines all three types of distraction.

# COGNITIVE DISTRACTION

- Contrary to popular belief, the brain cannot multitask.
- The brain switches, often rapidly, between two cognitive activities.
- **37%** decrease in parietal lobe activation, which processes moving visual images.





**Drivers talking on cell phones  
can fail to see up to 50% of the  
information in their driving  
environment.**

*- Dr. David Strayer,  
Director of the Center for the  
Prevention of Distracted Driving*

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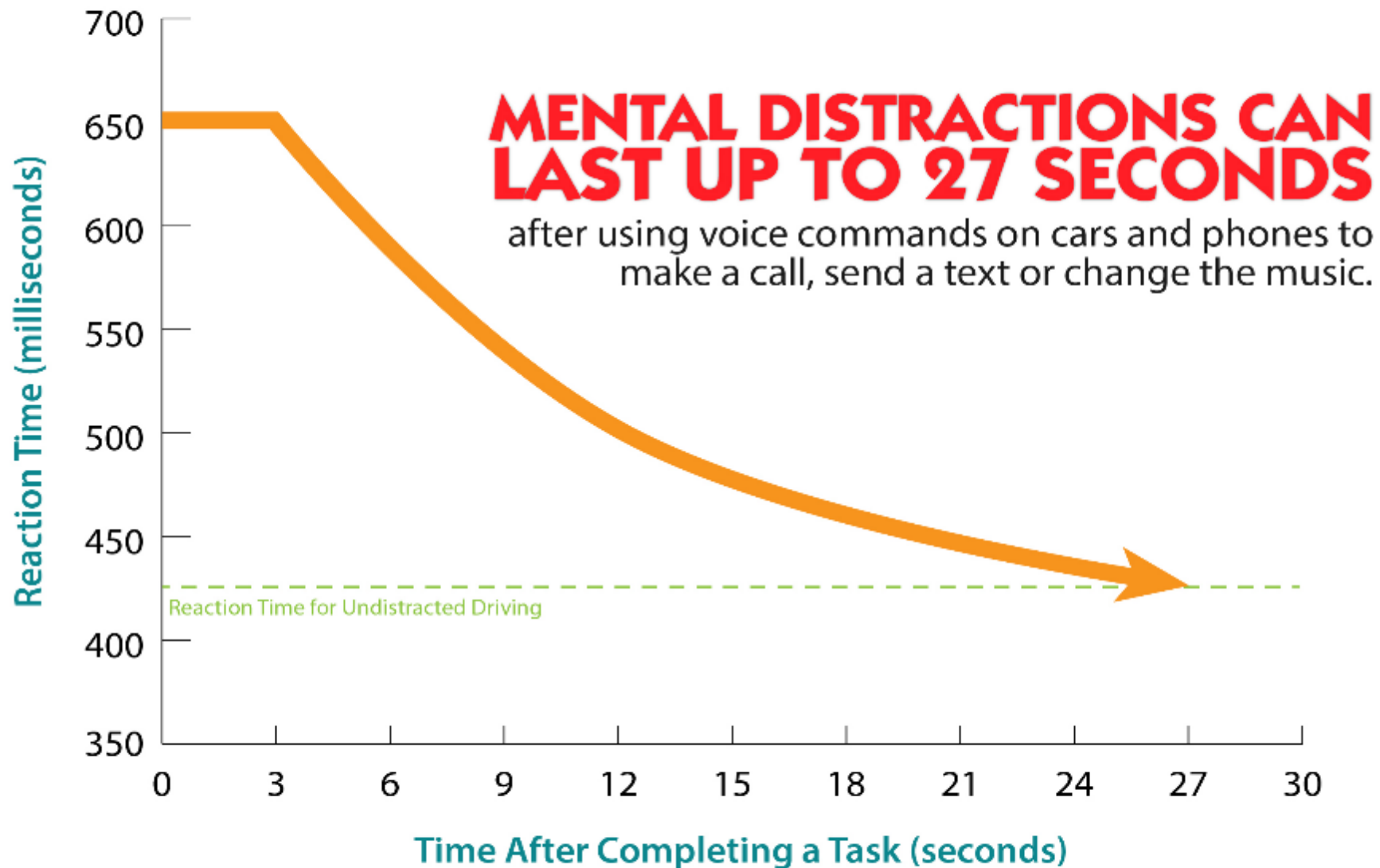


**TEXTING**

**SOFTWARE  
PROBLEM**

**DRIVING**

# LASTING EFFECTS OF MENTAL DISTRACTION



# EXPOSURE TO RISK

- Crash scenarios include mix of business-related and personal scenarios:
  - ✓ Driving during work hours and outside of typical work hours.
  - ✓ Driving to or from work appointments and driving for personal reasons.
  - ✓ Employer-provided and employee-owned vehicles.
  - ✓ Employer-provided and employee-owned phones.
  - ✓ Hands-free and handheld devices.
  - ✓ Business and personal conversations.

# CONSEQUENCES

- Significant liability with serious injuries and fatalities:
  - ✓ Civil – Large awards / settlements when cell phones in use during collisions; insurers and employers.
  - ✓ Criminal – Drivers sentenced for motor vehicle homicide; incarcerations seem to be ranging between 1 month and 10 years.

# CONSEQUENCES – CONT.

- \$24.7 MILLION – COMMERCIAL TRANSPORTATION COMPANY, 2008 CRASH IN MISSOURI
- \$21.6 MILLION – TECHNOLOGY COMPANY, 2007 CRASH IN FLORIDA
- \$21 MILLION – SOFT DRINK BEVERAGE COMPANY, 2010 CRASH IN TEXAS
- \$8.7 MILLION – STATE OF ILLINOIS, 2007 CRASH IN ILLINOIS (State Trooper)
- \$5.2 MILLION – PAPER COMPANY, 2007 CRASH IN GEORGIA
- \$4.1 MILLION – ELECTRICAL CONTRACTING COMPANY, 2006 CRASH IN ILLINOIS
- \$4 MILLION – PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, 2009 CRASH IN MARYLAND (Police Officer)
- \$2 MILLION+ – LAW FIRM, 2004 CRASH IN VIRGINIA
- \$1.75 MILLION – CAR DEALERSHIP, 2007 CRASH IN FLORIDA
- \$1.5 MILLION – STATE OF HAWAII, 2001 CRASH IN HAWAII (Teacher)
- \$1.45 MILLION – CITY OF PALO ALTO, 2006 CRASH IN CALIFORNIA (City Worker)
- \$1 MILLION – TRANSPORTATION COMPANY, 2013 CRASH IN OHIO

# CURRENT LAW

- The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) banned commercial truck and bus drivers from texting while driving in September 2010.
- Later, FMCSA banned all hand-held cell phone use by commercial drivers in November 2011.

# CURRENT LAW

- State laws:
  - ✓ 47 states<sup>1</sup> ban text messaging for all; all but 4 have primary enforcement.
  - ✓ 16 states<sup>1</sup> ban hand-held cell phone use
  - ✓ No state bans all cell phone use for all drivers, but 38 states and D.C. ban all use by novice drivers, and 20 states and D.C. prohibit for school bus drivers.

<sup>1</sup> Including D.C., Puerto Rico, Guam, and U.S. Virgin Islands.



# STRATEGIES TO REDUCE RISK

- Employers are going beyond state laws to follow the best practice of NO use of cell phones while driving:
  - ✓ Owens-Corning – 15,000 employees (CEO – 90 days of no cell phone use, hand-held or hands-free, while driving.)
  - ✓ Cummins – 48,000 employees
  - ✓ City of Tulsa Oklahoma (banned all non-emergency use)



# STRATEGIES TO REDUCE RISK – CONT.

- **Safe Driving Kit** from the National Safety Council (NSC) at <http://safety.nsc.org/safe-driving-kit>
  - ✓ FREE educational material, sample policy, etc.
  - ✓ Develop, implement and enforce.
- Sign up for **Distracted Driving e-Newsletter**, *Focus on the Drive*.
  - ✓ Keep updated on new research, educational materials and state laws
  - ✓ Impact stories related to cell phone distracted driving.

# STRATEGIES TO REDUCE RISK – CONT.

- Turn the phone OFF while driving or put it out of reach (e.g., in trunk)
- Enable *Do Not Disturb While Driving* feature or use equivalent app.
- Set different ring and text tones for specific contacts.
- Tell people who call you often to call twice in a row; park and return the call.

# STRATEGIES TO REDUCE RISK – CONT.

- Legally park in safe location to use cell phone.
  - ✓ Road / highway shoulders are not considered safe locations; your vehicle may cause a travel or sight restriction.
  - ✓ Most parking lots are considered ideal locations.
  - ✓ During low-light conditions, choose a well-lit area, be aware of your surroundings and lock doors.

# OBJECTIVES

Objectives revisited:

- ✓ Increase awareness about cognitive distraction.
- ✓ Prompt changes in behavior.
- ✓ Promote safe and successful habits.

Stay focused, stay safe!