

## *Driving Distractions Curriculum*

### ***Station Objective:***

- To educate participants on the dangers of distractions and ways to avoid them while driving.
- To educate participants on the dangers of falling asleep at the wheel.

### ***Materials Needed:***

- Handouts
- Brochures

### ***Activity Description:***

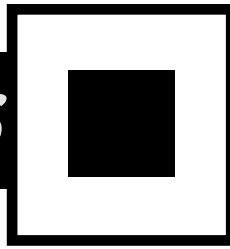
Conduct the interactive quiz with participants by having them stand up if they have engaged in any of the questioned tasks. Participants should remain sitting if they have never engaged in any of the questioned tasks.

Conduct discussion with participants after the quiz on related Driving Distractions and how to avoid them, why they are so dangerous and related statistics.

Conduct the interactive quiz with participants related to fatigue. Have participants stand up if the statement is true and remain sitting if the statement is false.

Conduct a discussion with the participants about the dangers of driving while sleepy, how to avoid falling asleep at the wheel, and the statistics involved with falling asleep at the wheel.





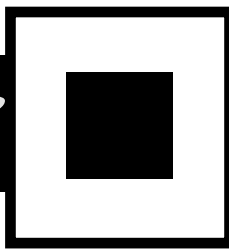
## Driving Distraction Interactive Quiz

*Have participants stand up if they have participated in any of the following activities.*

yes no

1. \_\_\_ \_\_\_ I have transported one or more people in my vehicle while driving.
2. \_\_\_ \_\_\_ I have operated a cell phone with one hand while driving.
3. \_\_\_ \_\_\_ I frequently adjust the radio, tape, or CD while driving.
4. \_\_\_ \_\_\_ I smoke while driving.
5. \_\_\_ \_\_\_ While driving, I occasionally eat or drink something.
6. \_\_\_ \_\_\_ I have adjusted the climate controls while the car is in motion.
7. \_\_\_ \_\_\_ I have read a book, newspaper or other type of text while driving.
8. \_\_\_ \_\_\_ I have attempted to reach for a fallen or falling object while driving.
9. \_\_\_ \_\_\_ I have attempted to read a map while driving.
10. \_\_\_ \_\_\_ While driving, I have participated in a stressful or confrontational conversation on the phone or with a passenger.





## Driving Distraction Facts

### Behind the Wheel: Teens & Driving Distractions

- Car accidents are the number one killer of teenagers in the United States. They account for more than 5,000 deaths each year.
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates that, in the year 2000, drivers age 16 to 20 were involved in 7,639 fatal crashes and an additional 572,000 injury-producing crashes.
- Though most fatal crashes involving teens occur at night, in a recent six-year period, 4,463 students were killed during school transportation hours. Sixty-seven percent of these fatalities involved 16-17-18-year-old students.
- Although 16-19 year olds make up only five percent of all licensed drivers, they are involved in 15 percent of all motor vehicle crashes.
- A 16-year-old driver is 20 times more likely to have an accident than all other drivers, says the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- Eight percent of fatal crashes involving 16-year-old drivers can be attributed to driver error, according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.
- Driving distractions, a contributing factor in one out of every four motor vehicle crashes, are a problem for all drivers. Different age groups, however, seem to be distracted by different things, suggests a University of North Carolina Safety Research Center study funded by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. Drivers under 20 are especially likely to be distracted by turning the radio or changing CDs.
- Younger drivers are also more likely to let anger interfere with their driving. A Progressive Auto Insurance study found that drivers age 18 to 24 are those most likely to use hand gestures, cut off other drivers and speed.
- The riskiest distraction for teen drivers are their passengers. Compared with drivers of the same age without passengers, the relative risk of driver death is 39 percent higher for 16-year-old drivers with one passenger, 86 percent higher for those with two passengers and nearly three times higher for those with three or more passengers, according to an American Medical Association study.
- Similarly, 63 percent of teen passenger deaths take place when another teen is driving, according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.
- Common driving distractions include using a cell phone, adjusting the radio, CD player or climate controls, programming an on-board navigational system, eating and drinking, paying attention to roadside activities such as accidents and construction, and talking to passengers while driving.

Source:

[www.everythingteen.com/lifestyles/](http://www.everythingteen.com/lifestyles/)

The increasing use of cellular phones in vehicles is part of a larger trend related to the introduction of technologies that could divert attention from driving.

- 44 percent of drivers have a phone with them when they drive, 7 percent have e-mail access, and 3 percent have facsimile capabilities.
- Estimating that cellular phone use contributes to just under 0.74 percent of total accidents, researchers calculated the costs of drivers' cellular phone use to be \$4.6 billion per year. (0.0074 times \$630 billion)
- About half of this \$4.6 billion is attributable to the 300 estimated fatalities associated with driver use of cellular phones, while the other half represents the costs associated with more minor accidents in which cellular phones were a contributing factor.

The combination of inexperience, ignorance and high spirits can be fatal for teen-age drivers.

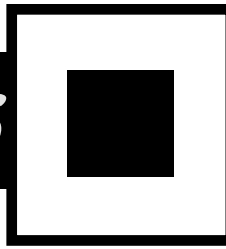
- The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety reports that 16-year-old drivers get in wrecks nearly nine times more often than those age 20 or over.
- For 17 year olds, the rate is six times higher than the adult rate.
- Statistics show that accident rates fall dramatically by age 18.
- While teens account for only 7 percent of all drivers, they are involved in 14 percent of all fatal auto accidents and 20 percent of all accidents, according to the American Automobile Association.
- Forty-three percent of these deaths occur between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. Two-thirds of teen-age passengers killed in auto accidents were riding in a car driven by another teenager.

Source: [www.ncpa.org/pd/regulat/pd032200d.html](http://www.ncpa.org/pd/regulat/pd032200d.html)

### Deadly Driving Distractions

- Adjusting radio/cassette/CD
- Other occupant
- Moving object in vehicle
- Other device/object
- Adjusting vehicle/climate controls
- Eating and/or drinking
- Using/dialing cell phone
- Smoking related
- Other distractions
- Unknown distraction





## Driving Distraction Facts

### Statistics

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among U.S. teenagers, accounting for 36 percent of all deaths of 15-19 year olds. About half of those who die are drivers, half passengers. But two-thirds of the deaths of passengers in this age group occur in cars driven by other teenagers.

In a new study using federal data from 1992 to 1997, researchers at the John Hopkins School of Public Health found that:

- A 16 year old carrying one passenger is 39 percent more likely to get killed than one driving alone.
- The likelihood increases 86 percent with two passengers and 182 percent with three or more.
- The rate for 17 year olds is even higher — 48 percent, 158 percent and 207 percent, respectively.
- The rate is up to 21 times higher during early morning hours when passengers are present
- While 93 percent of parents believe their teenage children buckle their seat belts whenever they drive, 39 percent of teen drivers confess they do not wear seat belts.
- Some 46 percent of parents said their teens never speed, but 77 percent of the kids admit they do.
- While 92 percent of parents are under the impression their teens do not drink and drive, 21 percent say they do.
- 40 percent of the young respondents say they have ridden with a teen driver who was impaired or intoxicated.
- More than 5,700 youngsters ages 16 to 20 were killed in motor vehicle crashes in 1998, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

### How to Avoid Driving Distractions

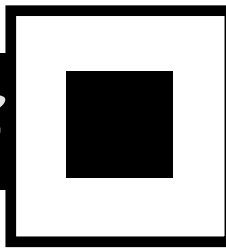
According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), driver distraction has been cited as a major cause of motor vehicle crashes for several decades, with an estimated 25 percent of the 6.3 million crashes reported by police each year involving some form of driver distraction.

- If you use a cellular phone, try to use a hands-free model or feature.
- Don't take notes or look up a phone number while driving
- Use memory dialing and directory assistance, when possible, while making calls from the car.
- Program your favorite stations into the radio for easy access.
- Arrange tapes and CDs in an easy-to-reach spot.
- Don't try to retrieve items that fall to the floor while driving.
- Wait until your vehicle is parked.
- Teach your children the importance of good behavior while in a vehicle. Don't underestimate how distracting it can be to tend to them in the car.
- Avoid eating while driving, but if you must, choose easy-to-handle items and make sure all drinks are secured in cup-holders.
- Designate a front-seat passenger to serve as "co-pilot" rather than fumble with maps of unfamiliar navigation systems.
- If you find yourself lost in thought while driving, take a break.
- Avoid stressful or confrontational conversations while driving, either on a cell phone or with another passenger.

Source:

[www.avroadandtravel.com/safetyandsecurity/ts\\_distractions.html](http://www.avroadandtravel.com/safetyandsecurity/ts_distractions.html)





## Fatigue

*Use your common sense to answer the true-false questions that follow stand up if you feel the question is true and remain sitting if you feel it is false.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Research shows that most people who fall asleep while driving tend to be above the age of 40 years old.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Younger people tend to sleep better at night than older people.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Older people appear to be better able to stay awake while very tired than do younger people.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Younger drivers have an advantage over older drivers because they tend not to feel as sleepy after a bad night's sleep.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Researchers recommend that sleepy drivers have a cup of coffee or use another drink which contains caffeine.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Pulling off the road and having a short sleep is often worse than not sleeping at all.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ If you are very determined, you can keep yourself awake while driving even if you are quite sleepy.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Most accidents which are caused by sleepy drivers occur in the early morning hours after midnight and before the sun rises and again in the early afternoon hours.

*Source: [www.bangkokpost.net/education/site2000/ptja0501.htm](http://www.bangkokpost.net/education/site2000/ptja0501.htm)*



## Fatigue

Little attention is paid to the dangers of falling asleep behind the wheel — to which teenage drivers are particularly vulnerable.

- Exhaustion plays a part in more than 100,000 car crashes each year, estimates the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.
- Drivers age 15 to 24 account for more than half of those, studies show.
- Experts say that beginning at about age 15, youngsters need more sleep than younger children or older adults — a minimum of nine hours a night.
- Yet teenagers sleep an average of six hours a night — rising early to get to school on time and going to bed late due to part-time jobs, school functions, homework, sports activities and socializing.

The three-hour deficit accumulates over several days and too often results in their dozing while driving. Teens are less experienced drivers and fail to recognize their limits, as adults would do.

Source: [www.ncpa.org/pd/regulat/pd020800e.html](http://www.ncpa.org/pd/regulat/pd020800e.html)

### ***Sleeping: The Enemy***

Every day, someone dies through falling asleep at the wheel. Major new research reveals who is most at risk.

Drowsy drivers are a major cause of death and injury on our roads. Some researchers even claim drivers are at a greater risk of dying if they fall asleep at the wheel than if they suffer a heart attack. When you're asleep, you don't brake.

Factors affect the likelihood of falling asleep while driving:

- Time of day
- Length of time you have been awake
- Amount of sleep you last had
- Quality of that sleep
- Whether you've taken stimulants (ex. Coffee) or depressants (ex. alcohol)

Drivers reach the stage of fighting sleep, of doing things to keep themselves awake, shuffling in their seat, opening the window, so they know they are sleepy. Sleepiness doesn't just come out of the blue.

Avoid those times of day when your metabolism are at a naturally low ebb. Statistics show distinct increases in accident rates between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. Then, our body temperature and hormonal activity decrease in the expectation of sleep.

Young drivers are more likely to be on the road at these times, which enhances their risks. Another danger period occurs between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.

Source: [www.bangkokpost.net/education/site2000/ptja0501.htm](http://www.bangkokpost.net/education/site2000/ptja0501.htm)

### ***Statistics***

- One in five motorists admits having fallen asleep at the wheel in the past year, according to National Sleep Foundation.
- Studies show that drowsy drivers have slower reaction time; impaired judgement and vision; increased moodiness and aggressive behavior; an more difficulty following road signs.
- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates drowsy drivers cause 100,000 crashes each year that result in more than 1,500 deaths and 71,000 injuries.
- 20% of people surveyed said that they had fallen asleep at the wheel.
- Men were more apt to drive while drowsy (59 percent to 47 percent for women), with young men, those 18 to 29, most likely to drive drowsy at 65 percent.
- Only 4 percent of all people polled said they drive to work feeling drowsy almost every day, but more than one-third of late shift workers said they drove in that condition.

Source: [www.fosters.com/special\\_sections/autos/articles2001/0928d\\_01.htm](http://www.fosters.com/special_sections/autos/articles2001/0928d_01.htm)



## Fatigue

### **Danger Signals: How Sleepy Are You?**

Take our drowsy driving quiz  
[www.aaafoundation.org/projects/index.cfm?button=quiz](http://www.aaafoundation.org/projects/index.cfm?button=quiz)

You can't control your own sleep — ask anyone who's ever had insomnia. If you're tired you can fall asleep at any time. If you're about to fall asleep, you will experience some or all of the following:

- You have trouble keeping your eyes open and focused
- You nod and can't keep your head up
- You daydream or have wandering, disconnected thoughts
- You yawn a lot or need to rub your eyes
- You find yourself drifting out of your lane or tailgating
- You miss road signs or drive past your turn
- You feel irritable, restless, and impatient
- On the Interstate, you drift off the road and hit the rumble strips

If you have even one of these symptoms you could be sleepier than you think. Pull off the road and get some sleep. It's dangerous to drive with your eyes closed.

AAA Foundation research identified some of the risk factors implicated in drowsy driving crashes. Ask yourself these questions:

- Have you been awake for 20 hours or more?
- Have you had six hours sleep or less in the last 24 hours?
- Do you often drive between midnight and 6 a.m.?
- Do you frequently feel drowsy while you're driving?
- Do you work the night shift?
- Do you work more than one job?

If you have any of these indicators you are at a much higher risk of having a drowsy-driving crash, even if you don't feel sleepy. Half the drivers who had drowsy-driving crashes said they felt "only slightly sleepy" or "not at all sleepy" right before the crash.

Source:  
[www.aaafoundation.org/projects/index.cfm?button=distractio](http://www.aaafoundation.org/projects/index.cfm?button=distractio)

### **Danger signs of fatigue**

Drowsiness can sneak up on you when you're driving. For teenagers, driving late at night, between eleven p.m. and two a.m. is particularly dangerous for falling asleep at the wheel. Here are some signs to watch for – and do something about before you run into a tree or another car.

- Yawning a lot
- Having trouble keeping eyes open
- Not being able to concentrate
- Not remembering the last few minutes or seconds
- Jerking of you head or body from the brink of falling asleep
- Car wanders from the road or into another lane

### **What to do:**

1. Slow down
2. Pull off the road into a safe parking space
3. Call home if you can
4. Talk to passenger if you have one
5. Turn radio to a lively station, try singing
6. Roll down window and get some fresh air for a few minutes, or turn vent on full blast
7. Make a pit stop, use the bathroom and get a Coke or coffee to drink

Source: [www.teendriving.com](http://www.teendriving.com)

