

DISTRACTED DRIVING in King County, Washington

REPORT CARD No. 1

NOVEMBER 2013



Distracted Driving – A Growing Threat

- Texting or talking while driving is dangerous, increasing crash risk by a factor of 4 (talking) to 23 (texting).
- Texting is like driving with a blood alcohol level of 0.19 g/dL, well over the legal limit of 0.08 g/dL.
- Distracted driving laws exist in more than 40 states, yet people continue to drive while distracted, putting others at risk.
- Washington's law bans hand-held phone use and texting while driving.

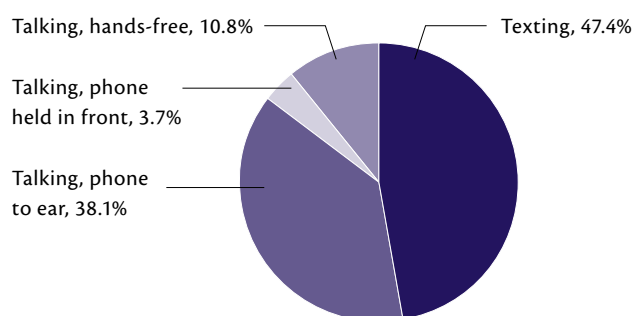
"Otherwise responsible drivers who talk or text cause collisions that kill or seriously injure others. These drivers are criminally prosecuted, just like other impaired drivers" — Amy Freedheim, Sr. Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, King County Prosecutor's Office

Distracted Driving in Washington State

In 2013, researchers at the UW/Harborview conducted the first ever observations of driver texting and cell phone use in Washington.

- Nearly one out of ten drivers (9.5%) were using cell phones or texting behind the wheel.
- Nearly half of the observed distracted drivers (47.4%) were texting.

TALKING AND TEXTING AMONG DISTRACTED DRIVERS IN WASHINGTON



Enforcement is the Key!

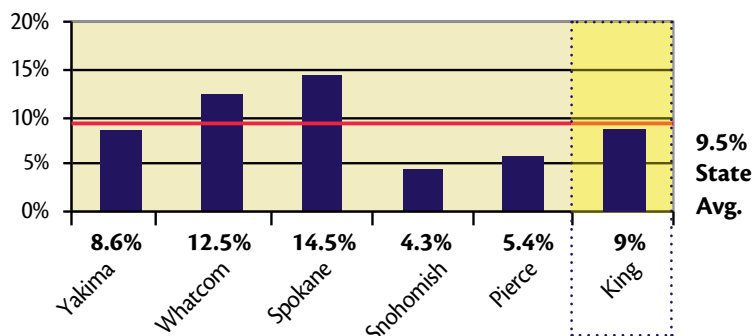
Good laws and good enforcement have made it safer for drivers in the state.

- Active enforcement is key to reducing distracted driving.
- Washington has the highest seat belt use rates in the nation due to active enforcement (2013).
- Enforcement patrols led to a dramatic decline in impaired driving deaths.

Distracted Driving in King County

- 9% of King County drivers were distracted (texting or talking on a cell phone).
- Among distracted drivers in King County, 38% were texting.
- Among drivers talking on the phone, only 25% were using a hands-free device.

DRIVERS OBSERVED USING AN ELECTRONIC DEVICE IN WASHINGTON COUNTIES



A Statewide Collaboration: Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center, UW Medicine, Public Health-Seattle & King County, King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office. Funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Resource: www.hiprc.org | Get DD Facts: www.distraction.gov | Questions or materials: stopdd@uw.edu