

# DISTRACTED DRIVING *in Spokane 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.

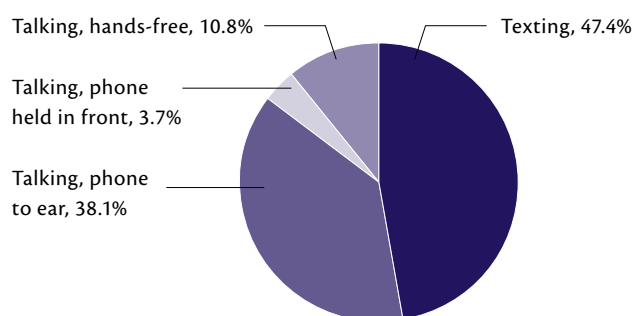
*"Otherwise responsible drivers who talk or text cause collisions that kill or seriously injure others. These drivers are criminally prosecuted, just like other impaired drivers"* — Amy Freedheim, Sr. Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, King County Prosecutor's Office

## *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!*

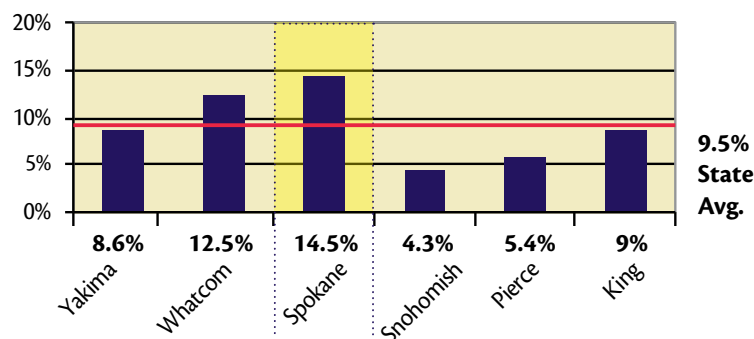
Good laws and good enforcement have made it safer for drivers in the state.

- 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 Spokane County*

- 14.5% of Spokane County drivers were distracted (texting or talking on a cell phone).
- Among distracted drivers in Spokane County, 67% were texting.
- Among drivers talking on the phone, only 6% were using a hands-free device.

DRIVERS OBSERVED USING AN ELECTRONIC DEVICE IN WASHINGTON COUNTIES



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Resource: [www.hiprc.org](http://www.hiprc.org) | Get DD Facts: [www.distraction.gov](http://www.distraction.gov) | Questions or materials: [stopdd@uw.edu](mailto:stopdd@uw.edu)