



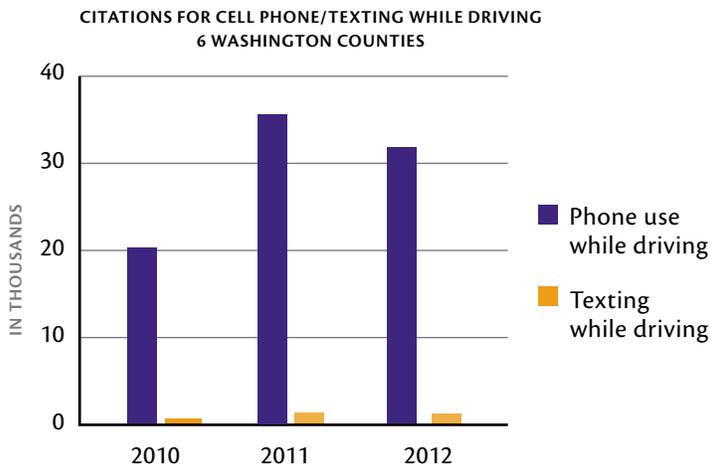
Distracted Driving – Enforcement is the Key

- Drivers know texting and talking while driving is against the law. However in a recent study, nearly 1 out of every 10 drivers were talking or texting.
- Distracted driving is impaired driving. Using a handheld phone is the equivalent of driving with a blood alcohol level of 0.08. Texting is even more dangerous, with a crash risk higher than driving with a blood alcohol level of 0.19.
- Effective enforcement is key to reducing distracted driving and keeping other road users safe.

“Now I write tickets. Drivers know that texting is against the law, but some folks think they can get away with it. I figure each ticket could prevent someone else from being hurt or killed.” – Bellingham Police Officer

Enforcement in 6 Washington Counties

- Tickets for cell phone use increased after passage of the primary enforcement law (2010).
- Citations for texting while driving have doubled.
- Drivers say that getting a ticket would convince them to put down the phone.



CELL PHONE CITATIONS BY COUNTY IN 2012

| County | Cell Phone Citations per 1,000 Licensed Drivers | Texting Citations per 1,000 Licensed Drivers |
|-----------|---|--|
| Snohomish | 18.0 | 0.76 |
| King * | 8.3 | 0.42 |
| Yakima | 8.0 | 0.2 |
| Spokane | 7.7 | 0.29 |
| Whatcom | 7.5 | 0.33 |
| Pierce | 6.2 | 0.61 |

* Includes state, county and city laws

Enforcement in Whatcom County

- Whatcom County officers wrote 1200 citations for talking or texting in 2012 (7.5 citations per 1000 licensed drivers).
- Citation rates in the top performing county were nearly 2.5 times higher than citation rates in Whatcom County.
- Citation rates for texting remain low, though more than half (52%) of Whatcom County distracted drivers observed in 2013 were texting.

Enforcement Strategies that Work — Tips from Officers:

- Consider distracted drivers as impaired drivers. Distracted drivers put themselves and others at risk of serious injury.
- Tickets are more effective than warnings.
- Detect texting at controlled intersections or run patrols with a designated spotter, like seat belt patrols.
- A higher vantage point for patrols is best. Some agencies use taller vehicles or motorcycle enforcement.
- Officers are public role models. The public expects officers to set a good example in their own behavior.
- Agency policies help. Some agencies have adopted policies to limit cell phone use on the job. Policies reinforce safe driving behavior and protect agencies from legal risk.