

Free essay on distracted driving

[Transportation](#), [Road](#)



Distracted driving is the act of driving while engaging in other activities such as talking on the phone, talking to a passenger, texting, reading novels or magazines, eating, looking after children, or engaging in any other form of activity other than driving. This activity takes the drivers attention away from the road and as such compromises the safety of the driver, other vehicles, passengers as well as bystanders. The United States Department of Transportation released statistics showing that more than 37% of drivers engage in other activities while driving and most of them admit doing it very regularly. Additionally, the report indicated that distracted driving increases the chances of causing an accident by 23% (Kiesbye, 92).

The distractors occur voluntarily or involuntarily. The aforementioned types of driver distractors can be classified into four broad categories. The four categories are cognitive, auditory, manual and visual. Visual distraction occurs when one looks at something rather than the road, cognitive distraction occurs when one's mind wanders off the driving act, manual distraction occurs when one's hands are off the steering wheel and auditory distraction occurs when one listens to some other distractive voice or noise(Kiesbye, 12). However, many of the distractors involve more than one of the above. Some combine sensory and mental.

A great portion of the people who are against laws that forbid engaging in other activities when driving argue that it happens without the drivers' will or knowledge and therefore no strict measures that should be taken against such drivers (Hilbert, 56). Some activities are beyond the psychological control of the driver and the law enforcers should therefore consider the situation under which distraction occurs before offering any verdict on a

driver found guilty of such an offence. Others too engage in distracted activities for reasons that are seemingly good. For instance, should one drive while a child in the same car is loudly weeping? It is perceived to be better if the driver turns and looks at the child to know exactly what is happening. For such reasons women specifically, are against the primordial laws that forbid distracted driving.

Distracted driving cannot merely be solved by enactment of stern rules. Banning some specific actions is unnecessary and impractical. It should better be solved by educating the public on its hazards. Drivers are the major subjects as far as distracted driving and road accidents are concerned. It is clear that most people do not want to be involved in road mishaps. If people are recurrently and adequately forewarned that negligence is the leading cause of the traffic accidents, they may positively take the message and will therefore willingly avoid driving distractors and consequently minimize the chances of being involved in road accidents. The many public resources invested in campaigns such as "speed kills" should be withdrawn and reinvested in educational and public relations efforts focused on distracted driving would be a far more fruitful use of these resources (Hilbert, 89). Many people are therefore of the view that the state government should pay less attention on legislation and more on educational programs if at all it wants to eliminate distractive driving from the American roads.

Many states have enacted policies that ban the use of cell phones when driving. These are poor policies which are more oppressive rather than solving the real problem at hand. Additionally, those laws are already

covered by current sidetracked driving laws. The belief that making the innocent and relatively harmless act illegal will reduce the prevalence and adversities of the act is a mere illusion. The state should stop relying on legislation as a way of solving the issue of distracted driving since even the laws that have been in place have been of little relevance (Hilbert, 54).

People still engage in distracted driving despite their being laws that are against the action. National Motorists Association (NMA) perceives the simple act of barring the use of mobile phones while calling as an oppressive Act that eliminates the need to exercising thoughtful discretion and reasoned judgment.

The mere fact that one is using a cell phone while driving does not imply that their attention is away from the road or away from the act of driving. Some people too are good in multi-tasking and the state should take into consideration the so many factors surrounding distracted driving before formulating and implementing any rules that relate to the same. The NMA is against this type of politically self-serving administration practice (Kiesbye, 122). An innocent harmless behavior should not be illegalized.

More than 42.56% of Americans advocate for training as the best strategy of curtailing abstracted driving. The unit in charge of issuing driving licenses should come up with a system that will enable them to put extra information on the license that designates supplementary approved skills. When drivers complete training, they should be issued with permits that are automatically marked for the specific training they have undergone and the additional skills that they have. For instance, it should contain marks such as "licensed to operate wireless devices when driving" (Kiesbye, 102). With such

preparation, drivers will be able to use their phones and GPS devices proficiently and the whole issue of road accidents that arise from inattentive driving will be solved.

Distraction driving is a practice that has far reaching and fatal consequences to human lives and the national economy. The number of deaths and disabilities caused by such careless driving has been on the rise and mobile phone is the leading distracter in the American society. A lot of the American economy goes to the victims of this recklessness on the road in form of health policies, insurance and paying for hospital bills. The practice also affects the families of the victim. There are many other forms of consequences that are associated with distracted driving and the lack of proper laws that enact harsh penalties on the offenders make the situation worse (Shannon, 2009). This is because most people are aware of the little penalties that do not exceed \$2, 000 or 6 months imprisonment and therefore they carry on with this ill and unsafe practices and activities that risk their lives as well as those of other road users.

The most fatal consequence of distracted driving is causing road accidents. It occurs that drivers who drive while at the same time are involved in other activities such as texting are four times most likely to cause an accident (MOT, 1).. When one is multi-tasking and driving, they are more likely to swerve in their lanes, stopping at green lights, running on red lights and / or narrowly missing a pedestrian because they have distracted attention due to mobile phone use. This is according to the United States Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. In such cases therefore, such drives are most likely to cause road accidents either by hitting other vehicles at a roundabout or

hitting pedestrians and also from distracting other drivers on the roads. This is increased by the assumption that people have that they can drive and text or talk at the same time.

Distracted driving is a platform to death and disability. As reports by the highway traffic safety administration have shown that many people are injured in motor accident each year in the United States. The severity of the injuries differs ranging from minor to fatal injuries that result to permanent disability. The accidents can cause death to the driver, passengers and to other road users (Shannon, 2009). It is sad that many lives are lost due to accidents that are caused by distracted driving and yet there are no stern measures being taken to curb the same. According to the Highway traffic safety, it is said that more than 15 people die daily and others more than 1200 are injured in crashes that involve distracted drivers.

In a study by the center for cognitive brain imaging, it was found that talking and listening on the phone while driving reduces the brain concentration of the part of the brain that is associated with spatial processing (MOT, 1).. This means that the brain concentration on the road is reduced by these distractions and therefore the drive becomes increasingly dangerous to themselves and other road users. The use of mobile phone in particular requires the government to enact laws that will make it illegal and put harsh penalties to law breakers. This will be a move to save lives and prevent other health problems associated with the same.

The government should however educate and great awareness as another way of trying to combat all forms of driving distractions. These calls for the ministry of transportation to use various media in educating road users and

make them aware of the dangers that accrue from the use of these distracters when on the road (Shannon, 2009). A good example is the approach used by the ministry of transport in Ontario where young drivers are discouraged from using their mobile phones or other wireless devices while driving and instead promoted initiatives such as iDrive program. Other safety messages are displayed on the ministry compass that rotate during non peak hours which tell driver to drive and talk later.

Therefore, distracted driving is a national and individual problem. Due to the increased cases of death and injuries, I personally advocate for the enacting of laws that will regulate the use of these distracters. There ministry of transportation should also employ measures that will ensure drivers comply with the set rule (MOT, 2). This will save lives and the economy of our country. It is furthermore important for all of us to collaborate with the government by taking the initiative to avoid the use of distracters and enhance safety on our roads.

Works Cited

Hilbert, Richard C. Distracted Driving. New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2011. Print.

Kiesbye, Stefan. Distracted Driving. Detroit: Greenhaven Press, 2012. Print.

MOT. " Distracted Driving - What are the consequences? ". Ministry of Transportation. Ontario, 2010. Web. 11 Dec. 2013.

Shannon L. Noder. " Talking and Texting While Driving: A Look at Regulating Cell Phone Use behind the Wheel." ValpoScholar | Valparaiso University Research. 2009. Web. 11 Dec. 2013. Available at <http://scholar.valpo.edu/vulr/vol44/iss1/7>

<https://assignbuster.com/free-essay-on-distracted-driving/>