

Resolution to Restrict Texting While Driving in Arizona

Background and Summary

Texting has become a social norm in recent years because of the popularity of smart phones. The scientific literature on the dangers of driving while sending a text message from a mobile phone, or driving while texting is growing. A study at the Accident Research Center¹ provided strong evidence that retrieving and sending text messages has a detrimental effect on a number of safety-critical driving measures including detecting and responding correctly to road signs, detecting hazards, time spent with eyes off the road.

Several studies have linked texting while driving to be the cause of life-threatening accidents due to driver distraction. A recent National Traffic Highway Safety Administration [NHTSA](#) report found that teens have the highest prevalence of cell phone use while driving and rank at the top of the list for being distracted at the time of a fatal crash.

For many years, Arizona has been one of only 3 states that did not restrict the use of smart phones while driving. During the 2017 Arizona Legislative Session [SB 1080](#) was passed and signed which restricts texting and driving among new drivers for the first 6 months of their license (if they're under 18). Using the phone in an emergency is still allowed and citations can only be issued if the driver committed another violation. Prior to this, the only other limitation in AZ to this kind of distraction applied to school bus drivers.

A study of US crash data called [Driver distraction and crashes: An assessment of crash databases and review of the literature](#) found that driver distraction (among all ages) is a contributing factor in 8% to 13% of crashes including cell phone distractions of between 1.5 to 5%.

Arizona's new law only restricts texting and driving among new drivers for the first 6 months of their license (if they're under 18), yet evidence suggests that texting while driving creates unnecessary and dangerous driver distractions that cause motor vehicle accidents that result in injuries and deaths.

1. *Hosking, S.G., Young, K.L., & Regan, M.A. (2006). "[The effects of text messaging on young novice driver performance](#)" (PDF). Retrieved 16 August 2014.*

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Whereas, the Arizona Public Health Association recognizes that texting has become a social norm in recent years because of the popularity of smart phones and studies have linked texting while driving to be the cause of life-threatening accidents due to driver distraction; and

Whereas, a recent National Traffic Highway Safety Administration [NHTSA](#) report found that smart phone use while driving is linked with distracted at the time of a fatal crash; and

Whereas, a study of US crash data found that driver distraction is a contributing factor in 8% to 13% of crashes including cell phone distractions of between 1.5 to 5%;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Arizona Public Health Association supports a law in Arizona that would prohibit texting and other smart phone use among all drivers.