

The New Drunk Driving



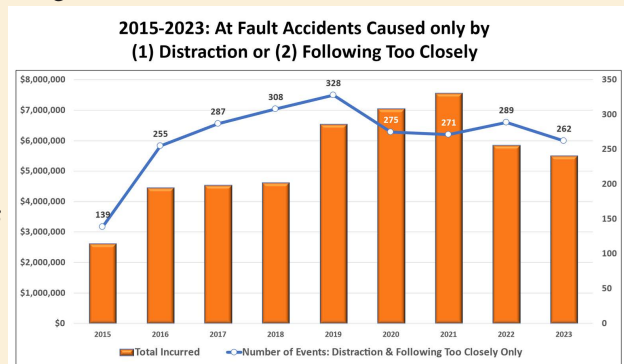
Florida Sheriffs Risk Management Fund has seen a substantial increase in the number of "At-Fault or Preventable" crashes as a result of distracted driving. A large portion of these crashes result in not only damage to your patrol vehicle but to vehicles driven by the citizens in our communities as well. Unfortunately, many times these crashes result in serious or catastrophic injuries to you and innocent individuals. The information following, courtesy of the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center, focuses on the risks associated with distracted driving.

What is distracted driving?

Distracted driving is any activity that diverts attention from driving, including MDT's, talking or texting on your phone, eating and drinking, talking to people in your vehicle, and adjusting the audio, entertainment or navigation system. Texting is the most alarming distraction. Sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for five seconds. At 55 mph, that's like **driving the entire length of a football field with your eyes closed**. You cannot operate a vehicle safely unless the task of driving has your full attention. Any non-driving activity you engage in is a potential distraction and increases your risk of crashing.

FSRMF Distracted Driving Claim Experience

*This chart demonstrates the number of At-Fault Accidents and cost associated on accidents caused by Distraction or Following Too Closely. **Accidents that are completely preventable.***



Some sobering stats:

- Distracted driving accounts for about 25 percent of all motor vehicle crashes.
- Nine people in the U.S. are killed each day as a result of crashes involving a distracted driver, according to the U.S. Department of Motor Vehicles, Since there is no way to test for distracted driving after an accident occurs, it's widely believed the number of crashes, injuries and fatalities caused by distracted driving are vastly underreported.
- It takes only three seconds after a driver's attention has been diverted from the road for a crash to occur.
- Driving distracted is compared to drunk driving since it follows the same psychological pattern: When drivers get away with driving distracted, they then continue to practice this bad habit until a crash occurs or they are caught and suffer consequences.



There are three common types of distractions:

Manual:

Anything that requires you to **take your hand off of the wheel**, such as:

- eating or drinking
- adjusting seat belts or certain vehicle controls
- texting and driving*
- talking on your phone*

Visual:

Anything that requires you to **remove your eyes from the road**, to include:

- changing a radio station
- adjusting the navigation system
- searching for items within the vehicle
- texting and driving*
- talking on your phone*

Cognitive:

Anything that take **your focus away from driving** - this could be:

- talking to passengers
- singing along with the radio
- driving with high emotion (sad, angry, etc.)
- texting and driving*
- driving on your phone (using navigation)*

Driving distractions such as these can:

- Reduce or **eliminate your reaction time** to a problem on the road; and/or
- Cause you to **lose control of the vehicle**

Such chaos can result in harsh consequences, such as severe injuries and even fatalities.

***NOTE:** Notice anything about each list? That's right - your **cell phone** falls right into **all three categories** of driving distractions. In fact, texting and driving along with talking on the phone has become the deadliest factor in distracted driving accidents.

Distracted driving is a complex issue that has demanded the attention of law enforcement and safety officials nationwide, both in enforcing as well as by implementing distracted driving policies within your agencies. Don't become a statistic. Fight against distracted driving to keep our roads safe and to set a good example for others!

Please contact FSRMF with any questions or for additional information at losscontrol@FSRMF.org
Information courtesy of U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center <https://safety.army.mil>