

IMPAIRED AND DISTRACTED

What does being impaired mean? You are not able to use your full processing skills and your hand-eye coordination is not functioning as well as usual. In other words when your judgment, reaction time, motor skills and memory are not working properly.

What can cause this to happen? The most common would be use of **alcohol**, with driving drunk or under the influence. Other substances like **drugs** also cause the inability of your mind to function at its peak. BUT another consideration is **distraction**, like the use of **cell phones** while driving. This is especially true of **texting** but also true of **talking** on your cell phone and eating.

How big is the problem of impaired driving? In 2015:

- 10,265 people died in alcohol-impaired driving crashes, accounting for nearly one-third (29%) of all traffic-related deaths in the United States.
- Nearly 1.1 million drivers were arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics. That's one percent of the 111 million self-reported episodes of alcohol-impaired driving among U.S. adults each year.
- Drugs other than alcohol (legal and illegal) are involved in about 16% of motor vehicle crashes.
- Marijuana users were about 25% more likely to be involved in a crash than drivers with no evidence of marijuana use.

(Source: Centers for Disease Control, www.CDC.gov)



What can you do about impaired driving?

Whenever your social plans involve alcohol and/or drugs, make plans so that you don't have to drive while impaired. For example:

- Before drinking, designate a non-drinking driver when with a group.
- Don't let your friends drive impaired.
- If you have been drinking or using drugs, get a ride home or call a taxi.
- If you're hosting a party where alcohol will be served, remind your guests to plan ahead and designate their sober driver; offer alcohol-free beverages, and make sure all guests leave with a sober driver.

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Each day in the United States, approximately 9 people are killed and more than 1,000 injured in crashes that are reported to involve a **distracted driver**. There are three main types of distraction:

- Visual: taking your eyes off the road;
- Manual: taking your hands off the wheel; and
- Cognitive: taking your mind off of driving

Drivers under the age of 20 have the highest proportion of distraction-related fatal crashes. In 2015, 42% of high school students who drove in the past 30 days reported sending a text or email while driving.

What can you do?

- Do not use your cell phone while driving.
- Do not text someone else when they are driving.

For more information about health events, go to www.HealthTent.org.