

Dangers of Distracted Driving: An Overview

1. Why distracted driving is dangerous

Distracted driving is one of the leading causes of crashes, especially among teens.

2. One of the biggest dangers for teen drivers: passengers

Make it clear that until they practice enough, teens can't have teen passengers. Many experts say no passengers for six months to a year. Check your local laws to see what restrictions are in place; you may want to be stricter than your state or local laws. One of the highest risk driving situations for teens is to drive with other teens in the car. Take a few minutes to talk about these dangers with your teen driver.

3. The distractions of electronic devices

- Talk with teens about not using a phone while driving and promise you won't either. Remember that in many states, laws are stricter for teens than adults—many prohibit the use of handheld and hands-free phones by teens while driving.
- Ask teens to adjust electronic devices (whether built into the car or not) before they start driving.
- Remind them not to adjust the radio, music player, GPS or other devices while driving.
- If your teen gets hungry, make sure they know to stop for food, skip the drive-thru and not to eat while driving.
- Other distractions could include actions such as applying makeup, talking to passengers, smoking and reaching for something in the back seat or glove compartment.
- Make sure they understand that their focus should be on driving.