

OMG thyre gunA ban txtN yl drivN!!!

Fourteen states and the District of Columbia have passed laws making texting while driving illegal. Senators now call for more states to ban texting in a moving vehicle or have their highway funds cut

July 30, 2009 (FPRC) -- Cincinnati, Ohio - - The Virginia Tech Transportation Institute recently conducted several naturalistic driving studies to test the impact of cell phone use on driving. The studies confirmed that cell phone use negatively affected a driver's risk of crashing or having a near crash experience. If you are texting you are 23 time more likely to have an accident!

The tests were performed in the participant's personal vehicle using advanced cameras and instruments and continuously observed drivers for six million miles of driving. The study showed that truck drivers who were texting were 23.2 times more likely to have a crash or a near crash. It also showed that drivers of cars were 2.8 times more likely to crash when dialing a phone than when driving undistracted. However, talking or listening to a cell phone made both car and truck drivers 1.3 and 1.0 times more likely to crash. The study also showed that when texting, drivers could travel the length of a football field at 55 mph without looking at the road.

This shows that talking and listening to your cell phone is not as dangerous as texting or dialing because they do not require you to take your eyes off the road.

Faced with this new information, some legislators are pushing for a ban on texting while operating a moving vehicle. They are forming a bill that would require states to ban texting while driving or lose 25 percent of their annual highway fund. However, there is some question of how the ban would be enforced. 'Highway safety laws are only effective if they can be enforced and if the public believes they will be ticketed for not complying. To date, that has not been the case with many cell phone restrictions,' said Vernon Betkey, chairman of the Governors Highway Safety Association. In order to have a successful ban, there would have to be an effective way of enforcing it. If a texting ban was in effect but talking on a cell phone was allowable and a person was pulled over for texting, they could say they were just dialing their phone and not be ticketed.

The new law would only ban texting in a moving vehicle, and texting in a stopped vehicle would still be allowable. Many people are proponents of this version of the ban. They argue that texting at a stoplight is not dangerous as long as the driver puts the phone down when the light turns green. However, others contend that all cell phone use is dangerous and a complete ban on cell phone use in cars should be put in place.

With the threat of losing much needed highway funds and the danger of texting, it seems that quite soon all states will adopt a ban on texting and driving. OMG.

To find your elected official and voice your opinions go to <http://www.congress.org/congressorg/home/>

References:

The Associated Press, 'Lawmakers Propose Ban On Texting While Driving'. NPR News. 29 July

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