

# DISTRACTED DRIVING FACTS

TIRF & DIAD, December 2017

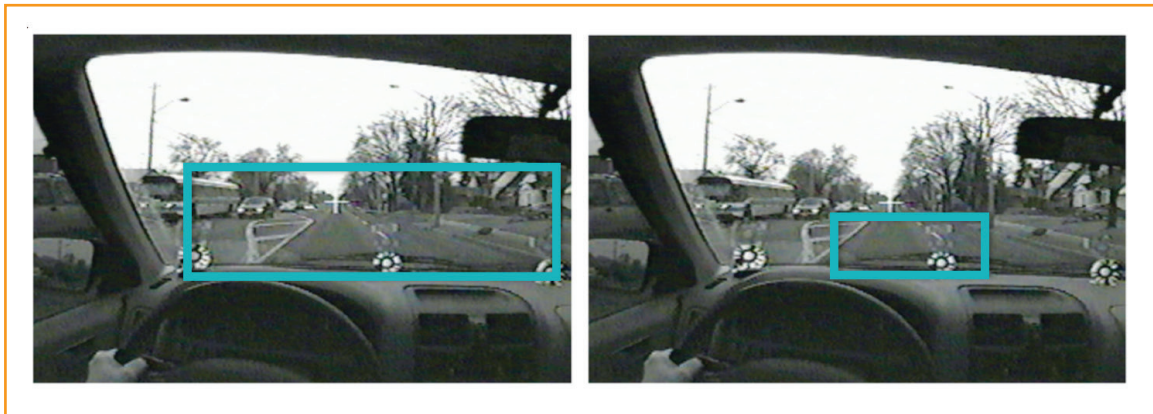


## Did you know?

- > Humans are serial processors of information. They are capable of consciously attending to only one task at a time (Smiley 2005). Given that people rapidly switch their attention back and forth across tasks, they falsely believe that they can “multi-task.” In reality, they cannot, and, as a consequence, are unable to devote optimal attention or focus to either task. In addition, the ability to rapidly shift our attention across tasks declines with age.
- > The distracted brain sacrifices areas of the posterior brain important for visual attention and alertness to recruit enough brain resources to perform a secondary, cognitive task.
- > There is a difference between ‘looking’ and ‘seeing.’ As drivers focus more attention on secondary tasks unrelated to driving they begin to suffer from “inattention blindness,” particularly as secondary tasks become more complex. They may look but not “see” what is happening in the driving environment. It is estimated that drivers using a cell phone may fail to see up to 50% of the available information in their driving environment.



\*Source: *Driver Distraction and Hands-free Texting While Driving*, TIRF 2013



**Your field of view significantly diminishes even on hands-free calls.** \*Source: *Transport Canada*

- > Our perception and reaction time, at the prime of our lives, is 3/4 of a second to recognize what we see and 3/4 of a second for the brain to send the signal to begin to physically react.
- > At 100km/h, a driver travels 52 metres or the length of a hockey rink, when they look away for just 2 seconds. This increases risk because the road environment can change considerably in just two seconds.

## Distracted driving stats

- > Road fatalities involving distracted driving as a contributing factor have generally increased across all age groups. Almost one in four fatal crashes in 2013 involved distraction. (*National Action Plan* - <http://tirf.ca/TIRFCAD17A>)
- > While distraction among teen drivers is often a focus of concern, a closer examination of the data in 2013, revealed that drivers aged 20-34 years were most likely to be distracted in fatal crashes, followed by drivers aged 65 years and older. (*The Role of Driver Age in Fatally Injured Drivers in Canada, 2000-2013* <http://tirf.ca/TIRFCAD16L>)



- > In a 2010 public opinion poll by TIRF:
  - » more than 1 in 4 drivers (27%) admitted to having to brake or steer to avoid a crash in the past 30 days due to external distractions and 12% reported doing so due to internal distractions;
  - » 4.3% of drivers admitted to being involved in a crash due to an external distraction and 2.7% indicated they had a crash due to an internal distraction; and,
  - » 30% of Canadians thought that talking on a phone behind the wheel was dangerous only if the phone was handheld (Robertson et al. 2011).
- > In a 2016 poll by TIRF, while just 4% of drivers disclosed that they engaged in non-driving activities while in control of a vehicle, a



would still require drivers to take control of the vehicle under more challenging driving conditions.

concerning 16% of respondents reported they would engage in such activities when using a semi-automated vehicle which

## Take Action. Prevent Distraction.

Drop It And Drive™ (DIAD) is a Traffic Injury Research Foundation education program focused on preventing distraction-related road user fatalities and injuries. DIAD delivers corporate seminars that are customized to the environment, features and context of your specific workplace. Seminars are structured to be thought-provoking and interactive to maximize learning across administrators, managers and staff. Science and real-life stories are shared to motivate safer behaviours in the workplace and at home, and participants are provided with practical strategies and tools to minimize distractions behind the wheel. School presentations tailored to younger audiences are also available, and can be delivered in conjunction with a corporate seminar at no additional cost. Since 2010, DIAD has presented to more than 60,000 workers and youth across North America. For more information, visit: [www.DropItAndDrive.com](http://www.DropItAndDrive.com) or call (877) 238-5235.



## Traffic Injury Research Foundation

The mission of the Traffic Injury Research Foundation (TIRF) is to reduce traffic-related deaths and injuries. TIRF is a national, independent, charitable road safety research institute. Since its inception in 1964, TIRF has become internationally recognized for its accomplishments in a wide range of subject areas related to identifying the causes of road crashes and developing programs and policies to address them effectively.

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