

ARTICLES ON TEXTING AND DRIVING

U.S. bans texting by truck and bus drivers

By Steven Reinberg
HealthDay Reporter

TUESDAY, Jan. 26, 2010 (HealthDay News) -- Truck and bus drivers who travel interstate roadways are now banned from using a handheld device to send text messages, U.S. officials said Tuesday.



The ban, which is supported by the trucking and bus industry, goes into effect immediately, with violators subject to up to \$2,750 fines, U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said during a morning press conference.

"We said the federal government would do everything in its power to send a clear message that texting, talking and driving are potentially lethal activities with very serious consequences," LaHood said. "Today we are sending a strong message. We don't merely expect you to share the road responsibly with other travelers -- we will require you to do so."

More than 500,000 people were injured and nearly 6,000 people were killed last year in motor-vehicle accidents involving a driver who was distracted while using a cell phone or texting device, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The hardest part of banning texting and talking on cell phones is enforcement, LaHood admitted. However, he noted that laws requiring seat belts and the laws against drunken driving were also hard to enforce at the start, but raising awareness has helped to get more people to use seat belts and not drive drunk.

Research from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration found that drivers sending and receiving text messages take their eyes off the road for about 4.6 seconds out of every 6 seconds while texting, Anne Ferro, the agency's administrator, said during the press conference.

At that rate, a driver going 55 miles an hour would travel the length of a football field, including the end zones, without looking at the road, she said.

People who text while driving are 23 times more likely to get in an accident than non-distracted drivers, LaHood said. The agency is working on more regulation to reduce the use of cell phones and other electronic devices among interstate truck and bus drivers, Ferro added.

William P. Graves, president of the American Trucking Association (ATA), said during the press conference: "We realize that texting on a handheld phone or wireless device while driving substantially elevates the risk of being involved in an accident. ATA does support DOT's action to ban the use of handheld wireless devices by commercial drivers while driving to send or receive text messages."

In September, President Barack Obama signed an executive order prohibiting federal employees from using cell phones or sending text messages while driving government-owned vehicles or with government-owned equipment. The ban took effect Dec. 30, LaHood said.

Texting and talking while driving: why cell phones cause accidents Jan 13, 2010



If you text and drive, the chance of having an accident quadruples.

By Diane Griffith, Staff Writer, myOptumHealth

You're driving along the highway and suddenly remember the doctor's appointment you were supposed to make. You don't want to forget again, so you quickly push the "contacts" button on your cell phone, scan for your doctor's name and push "send."

After calling and making your appointment, a beeping noise alerts you that you've received a text. It could be important, so you quickly avert your eyes from the highway to scan your message. You hastily text back a reply.

Does this sound like you -- or maybe your teen? If so, the chance of having an accident *quadruples*, research shows.

Distracted drivers

Distracted driving is a term that refers to more than what happens when a driver uses a cell phone. It also covers other behaviors that cause accidents. Applying makeup, talking to a passenger or reaching for a baby's dropped bottle can all affect your awareness on the road. Yet, none of these other distractions increase your risk of having an accident more than using a cell phone, studies have found.

At any given moment, one in 10 drivers on the road is using a cell phone. Over half of surveyed drivers admitted to using a cell phone at least occasionally while driving. Young drivers were much more likely than older drivers to text while driving.

State laws

Five U.S. states, the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands all now prohibit drivers from using handheld devices, although hands-free devices are allowed. The District of Columbia and 14 states ban text messaging while driving. Some cities have cell phone laws, too.

Most drivers who use cell phones think it's safe to talk on a hands-free cell phone. There is overwhelming evidence, though, that both handheld and hands-free phones are equally risky.

Effects on drivers

You have four times the risk of being in a crash if you're on the phone while driving. Talking on a cell phone while driving lowers your reaction time, studies confirm. This is believed to be caused by a phenomenon known as "perceptual blindness." It suggests that when a person focuses on one task (like talking on the phone), he or she fails to notice unexpected distractions -- even when looking at them.

One study found that drivers talking on cell phones were more likely than other drivers not to see traffic signals. They were also slower to react to brake lights when following a vehicle. As a result, they were more likely to cause rear-end crashes than other drivers.

View the original [Texting and talking while driving: why cell phones cause accidents](#) article on [myOptumHealth.com](#)

TEXTING WHILE DRIVING: MEDICAL GROUPS SPEAK OUT By: Johnathan Welsh

The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons and the Orthopaedic Trauma Association are the latest groups to weigh in on just how bad the epidemic is. They should know, as they treat a lot of people injured in car crashes. "To say this habit can be deadly is the truth. It is an outcome we unfortunately see every day," said AAOS president John J. Callaghan. "The problem with the use of 24/7 communications devices is that every driver believes he or she is immune to slip ups, but isn't."

The groups are sponsoring a national print and billboard ad campaign urging people to give up the often-deadly habit. The ads read, "OMG. Get the Message: Texting While Driving is a Deadly Distraction." The words appear over a broken, bloody windshield. Distribution of the print ads starts Monday. Billboards have been sent out and should appear shortly.

Of course many people are so immersed in typing or reading their handheld screens that they might miss the billboards as they drive past. We have all seen — or even performed — outrageous driving maneuvers after distractions caused us to stray from our lane, miss an exit or nearly run a red light. I find that once I get over the initial anger I always feel at least a touch of empathy. The orthopaedic groups say 520,000 people were injured in texting-related car crashes in 2008. The National Safety Council, another group that gathers automotive safety statistics, estimates about 28 percent of crashes, or 1.6 million a year, result at least in part from drivers talking or texting on cell phones.

July 27, 2009 10:49 PM PDT CNET NEWS

Study: Texting while driving increases crash risk 23-fold

by Jennifer Guevin

It isn't exactly breaking news that [texting while driving](#) is a bad idea. But a study released Monday night reveals just how dangerous it really can be. After examining the behavior of truck drivers covering more than 6 million miles of road, the [Virginia Tech Transportation Institute](#) concluded that people who send text messages while driving are 23 times more likely to be in a crash (or what they call a near-crash event) than nondistracted drivers.

To conduct the study, researchers mounted cameras inside drivers' vehicles. They studied where drivers' eyes were looking as they did various things, such as texting, dialing a cell phone, talking on a phone, and reaching for an object. Not surprisingly, the numbers ([PDF](#)) showed that the tasks that took people's eyes off the road caused the greatest amount of danger.

In crashes or near-crashes, texting took a driver's focus away from the road for an average of 4.6 seconds--enough time, the report point out, to travel the length of a football field at 55 mph. By contrast, talking on a cell phone, which allows drivers to keep their eyes on the road, represented an increased risk of only 1.3 times that of a nondistracted driver.

The study's authors called into question past research that indicated driving while talking on a cell phone is as dangerous as driving drunk. While those results may have been found in lab tests and driving simulations, they say, the same was not true in real-world situations. They also noted that, contrary to popular belief, talking on a cell phone with a wireless headset is not substantially safer than talking on a regular handset. This is because the most significant factor as far as safety is concerned is to keep one's eyes on the road, the report said.

The institute says any task that takes a driver's eyes off the road should be avoided and suggests that all cell phone activity should be banned for newly licensed teenagers because they're more prone to using their phones. (Note: For more details, The New York Times has a [breakdown of the study's methodology](#).)

Do anti-texting laws work?

By Luigi Fraschini

FROM THE PAGES OF 

In the war against distracted driving, banning of texting while driving has been a major battle.

But now, research from the Auto Club of Southern California has found that after an initial drop, texting while driving appears to be on the rise 15 months after California's texting ban was implemented.

The auto club says the observational roadside survey of drivers is the first examination of the long-term effects of a U.S. texting law. It is unlikely to be the last.

Before the texting law went into effect in California in January 2009, three auto club surveys conducted in mid- to late 2008 showed consistently that about 1.4 percent of motorists were texting at any point in time. Two surveys conducted shortly after the texting ban (May and July 2009) showed that texting (or manipulating electronic devices) had dropped about 70 percent, to about 0.5 percent. The latest survey, conducted in late March and early April 2010, shows that texting has more than doubled from the earlier studies, to 1.1 percent.

Many studies have clearly demonstrated the risks related to texting while driving. One study shows texting and driving raises the probability of a crash eightfold, while another shows it increases a truck driver's chance of being in a crash by a factor of 24. Researchers call texting a "perfect storm" of danger because drivers take their hands off the steering wheel, and their eyes and minds are off the road.

"These results are disappointing," said Steven Bloch, the auto club's senior researcher. "The fact that we're seeing a statistically significant rise in texting despite the state ban indicates that additional efforts are needed to help deal with the problem. It's just over a year after California's texting ban was implemented, and texting is rising toward the level it was before the law."

Several states have imposed similar bans of texting while driving, so the problem is potentially nationwide. One approach to change the tide against texting while driving is for law enforcement to issue more citations. However, it's difficult for law enforcement agencies to cite texting motorists. Drivers typically hold devices in their lap, making it hard for law enforcement to see what motorists are doing. Texting citations are often given out by motorcycle officers, who have a better view of driver actions.

Because of this challenge, the California Highway Patrol reports issuing an average of only about 150 citations per month since the texting ban went into effect. By comparison, over the past year, the CHP issued about 11,600 hand-held cell phone citations each month.

"Agencies may need to rethink how they cite drivers for texting," said Bloch. "A targeted New Jersey enforcement program uses officers standing on street corners to locate, pull over and cite cell phoning and texting drivers. That method of enforcement may be more effective."

A second way to deter drivers from texting is by increasing penalties. The Auto Club of Southern California is currently supporting a proposed state bill that would raise the texting fine to \$100 plus penalty assessments, up from \$20 for a first offense and \$50 for subsequent offenses. The bill also imposes a point on a motorist's driving record.

"Moving violations typically require the DMV to impose a point, and there is little reason that this dangerous traffic violation should be treated differently than others," said Bloch. "Studies have established that imposing points on driving records is a very effective deterrent to hazardous driving."

So while legislation to ban texting behind the wheel is a good and necessary first step to eliminating this hazard, those laws need to have real teeth to be effective.

Oprah's No Texting Campaign

The Oprah Winfrey Show | January 15, 2010



Millions of people text, talk or e-mail on their cell phones while driving—a recent survey finds that 71 percent of people between the ages of 18 and 49 admit they text or talk on the phone while they drive.

If you think you can call, text and drive at the same time, you cannot. That message you can't wait to send could kill. Distracted driving is an epidemic that is sweeping through our country, claiming lives and destroying families.

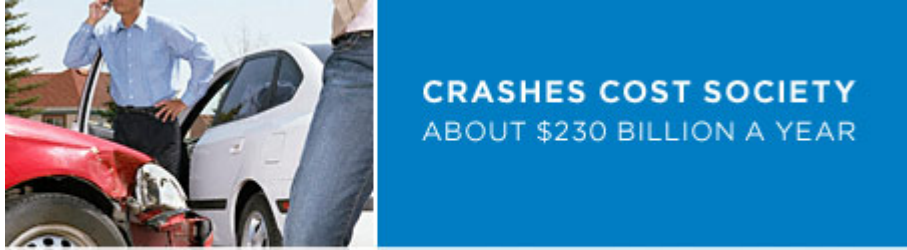
Oprah's message for you 📺

In September 2008, a Los Angeles commuter train conductor missed a red light while sending and receiving more than 40 text messages. His packed train collided head-on with a freight train, injuring 135 people. The conductor and 24 others were killed, making it the second worst commuter train crash in U.S. history.

Weeks later, a school bus carrying 21 students was rear-ended by an 18-wheel semitruck. The bus was pushed more than 200 feet before bursting into flames. Twenty students escaped, but 13-year-old Margay Schee was killed. The truck driver admitted he had been texting and hadn't seen that the bus was stopped.

These accidents made national headlines, but so many others have been killed in communities just like yours. Nearly 500,000 people are injured and 6,000 are killed each year because drivers are talking, texting and e-mailing behind the wheel. "It is my prayer that this show, this day will be a seminal day in your life," Oprah says. "Let it be the end, the end of you using a cell phone or sending a text message when you are behind the wheel of a moving vehicle. And until we as a nation decide we're going to change that, those numbers are only going to go up."

Driving While Distracted: Statistics You Need to Know



www.nationwide.com

Learn about the risks of driving while distracted with texting while driving statistics from Nationwide

Learn about the danger of driving while distracted (DWD) and cell phone use while driving with helpful information from Nationwide Insurance to help prevent driving while texting accidents when you're behind the wheel.

A new *On Your Side*® survey by Nationwide verifies with concrete cell phone driving statistics the general assumption that there is strong public support for legislation to restrict cell phone usage while driving.

The results of the new survey show there are varying degrees of support for different types of restrictions based on these texting while driving statistics.

- 8 in 10 drivers support some type of cell phone usage restriction.
 - The majority of respondents say they are supportive of laws restricting any type of cell phone use while driving.
 - 80 percent respondents support a ban on text messaging while driving.
 - 80 percent of respondents support a ban on e-mailing while driving.
 - Two thirds (67 percent) of respondents say they are supportive of laws restricting phone calls while driving.
- Of those who supported enacting some type of cell phone usage restriction, nearly 3 in 4 believed the law should apply to all drivers, not just specific groups.

Read other cell phone driving statistics

- Distraction from cell phone use while driving (hand held or hands free) extends a driver's reaction as much as having a blood alcohol concentration at the legal limit of **.08 percent**. (University of Utah)
- The **No.1** source of driver inattention is use of a wireless device. (Virginia Tech/NHTSA)
- Drivers that use cell phones are **four times** as likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves. (NHTSA, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety)
- **10 percent** of drivers aged 16 to 24 years old are on their phone at any one time.
- Driving while distracted is a factor in **25 percent** of police reported crashes.
- Driving while using a cell phone reduces the amount of brain activity associated with driving by **37 percent** (Carnegie Mellon)

Texting While Driving: What the Statistics Say



50% of teenage drivers admit to texting while driving. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration 5,870 people died in car accidents in 2008. An additional 515,000 people were injured. 28% of all accidents in 2008 were caused by drivers between the ages of 18 and 29 that were texting while driving. However, teenagers are not the only ones to blame. 81% of the U.S. population admits to texting while driving. Most drivers today are aware of the risks of texting while driving but do it anyways. Across the country states are making waves to ban texting while driving. Many other countries are taking the same steps to ensure the safety of their drivers. Studies have shown that texting causes greater impairment than being on drugs or drinking while driving. Currently accidents caused by distracted drivers that result in fatalities are half as common as accidents resulting in fatalities from drunk driving.

Texting While Driving is Just as Bad as Drunk Driving

Written by WGNO New Orleans, LA ABC26 News | Monday, 26 April 2010 14:30

It's illegal, but many people still do it. Now, some say it's as dangerous as drunk driving texting behind the wheel. How many times have you texted while driving? Did you know that you're 24 times more likely to get into an accident while texting? Motorist William Collins says, "On my way home from work one day, driving and texting almost ran into the back of another car, bad idea, don't do it."

So why is it so hard to quit texting? Could it be addictive? One expert says it just may be. Beth Inbau, president of the National Safety Council explains, "Initially when a teenager for example does a lot of text messaging, when they first pick up that cell phone, and receive a message or send a message, there's a little shot of dopamine that goes off in the brain which is kind of the precursor of an addiction."

But it's still not an excuse, as mom Shirley Lucurto knows full well. "I have a 20 year old and an 18 year old who like to text and I always fuss at them not to do that especially when nobody else is paying attention on the road" Lucurto says.

So education is key...kids need to know that texting while driving is illegal in Louisiana, and now lawmakers are trying to pass federal legislation making it illegal in every other state as well. Perhaps the message will save a life, or prevent another from going to jail. Teen driver Alex Martin admits, "I think I'm pretty much gonna stop because now you know and studies show you that it's the worse thing to do probably while driving."

Controversial Texting While Driving PSA Set To Be Released Monday

By [ROB LANDRETH](#) Published: May 09, 2010 **News Channel 7 SPARTANBURG, SC --**

A controversial Public Service Announcement about the dangers of texting while driving is scheduled to be released Monday throughout the upstate of South Carolina and in Columbia.

"This video may shock some viewers and that is the intent: to create a lasting impression that texting while driving is deadly," said Thomas Crosby, President of AAA Carolinas Foundation for Traffic Safety. The PSA begins with three teenage girls driving down the road and the driver trying to send a text message. It jumps forward to a head-on crash that partially ejects one girl from the vehicle and then a second collision, where a car strikes the teenagers in the side of their vehicle. The commercial displays graphic depicted injury scenes from the sight of the accident, where two girls perish and shows injured people involved. It ends with the statement, "You Drive, You Text, You Die." In the prepared statement released late Saturday night, AAA Carolinas President and CEO, Dave Parsons, said that the goal of the commercial is to elicit an emotional response to residents in South Carolina, which was rated the worst state in the nation for texting while driving, according to a 2008 online survey.

"Its one thing to tell people not to text and drive," said Parsons. "By eliciting an emotional response, we hope this video will change deadly distracted driving behavior." The Foundation says that the commercial is part of a continuing effort to educate motorists on the dangers of distracted driving. "Using a cell phone (talking hands-free or hand-held) while driving is very dangerous, as many motorists know from personal experience or from watching drivers using cell phones in nearby cars," Parsons said.

Earlier this year, Clemson City Council passed a no-texting-while-driving ordinance, which will go into effect June 1, making the town the first and only in South Carolina to make it illegal to text while driving. Other similar legislation has been introduced in the South Carolina House of representative, but it has yet to be passed.

Be advised, the PSA contain extremely graphic material that some people may not find suitable, especially for young children, but you can view the controversial PSA on the organization's website at http://lamanagementco.com/wp-content/uploads/AAA_30sec_PSA.zip A full 4 minute unedited video depicting the entire accident scene can also be viewed at the groups website at the following link: http://www.aacarolinas.com/Automotive/Safety/distracted_driving.htm.

Truckinginfo.com 5/17/2010

NTSB Investigation of Deadly Crash Confirms Cell Phone Use

The National Transportation Safety Board issued an update regarding its investigation of the March highway accident that killed 11 people in Kentucky. The investigation found that the truck driver was using a cell phone at some point leading up to the accident, but it's unknown whether or not he was using it when the truck departed the roadway. The NTSB would not make a determination about whether the cell phone use was a factor in the accident.

The NTSB said Kenneth Laymon, 45, had been driving a 1999 Freightliner truck with a 53-foot semitrailer southbound on I-65 near Munfordville, when he departed the left travel lane at about a five-degree angle, crossed a 60-foot wide grass median, overrode a four-cable guardrail barrier and struck a 15-passenger van that was traveling in the left northbound lane. The truck continued across the northbound travel lanes, overturning, struck a stone wall, and engulfed in a post-crash fire.

The van was not involved in any post-crash fire. The 2000 Dodge van was carrying nine adults, two children and an infant. The two children were the only survivors. Eight of the nine adults were not wearing seat belts, NTSB said.

The truck was on a 690-mile trip from Lansing, Mich. To Cullman, Ala. The driver set out from Lansing at about 4 p.m. the previous day. The accident occurred about 13 hours later with about 243 miles remaining in the trip. Investigators are trying to determine how many hours the truck driver was operating the vehicle and if he took any rest periods between his departure from Lansing and the point at which the accident occurred, NTSB said. *The truck was not equipped with an electronic onboard recorder*, and the driver's logbook was destroyed in the fire.

28 percent of accidents involve talking, texting on cellphones

By Ashley Halsey III Washington Post Staff Writer Wednesday, January 13, 2010

Twenty-eight percent of traffic accidents occur when people talk on cellphones or send text messages while driving, according to a study released Tuesday by the National Safety Council.

The vast majority of those crashes, 1.4 million annually, are caused by cellphone conversations, and 200,000 are blamed on text messaging, according to the report from the council, a nonprofit group recognized by congressional charter as a leader on safety.

Because of the extent of the problem, federal transportation officials unveiled a organization Tuesday, patterned after Mothers Against Drunk Driving, that will combat driver cellphone use. The group, FocusDriven, grew out of a meeting on distracted driving sponsored by the U.S. Department of Transportation in the District last year.

Virtually everyone owns a cellphone, and it's evident to anyone who drives regularly that huge numbers of people, including some who support a ban, use them while driving. Persuading people to break that habit could be a tall order for FocusDriven.

"It's hard because everyone's addicted to their cellphone," said FocusDriven's president, Jennifer Smith, a Texan whose mother was killed by a man who ran a red light while talking on his cellphone. "That's where we come in. We put a real, human face to it. We're going to put the pressure on legislatures." Enforcement of a texting ban requires officers to observe an act that usually is conducted in a driver's lap, and hands-free devices make it possible to talk on cellphones without being observed. More than 120 studies of cellphone use suggest that using hands-free devices doesn't eliminate the distraction caused by a phone conversation.

"It's not easy to enforce [a ban], but it's not impossible," said Chuck Hurley, executive director of MADD, who attended Tuesday's announcement of the new group's formation. "The main reason people talk on their cellphones is because they can. Eventually, [signal blocking] technology will address that."

Smith said law enforcement needs stronger laws and better tools to enforce them.

"Using a subpoena to get cellphone records has got to be a standard procedure," she said. "Perhaps cars should have a data recorder, like [an airplane's] crash recorder to use in these cases."

Whether the political will to enforce bans on cellphone use while driving exists is another matter.

Bans on text messaging while driving illustrate the challenge. Nineteen states and the District have banned it, but in four of those states, Virginia, New York, Washington and Louisiana, the laws require that an officer have some other primary reason for stopping a vehicle.

"That makes it impossible for police to enforce it effectively," said Illinois state Sen. John J. Cullerton (D), a leading traffic safety advocate. "It's a convenient way to compromise and get bills passed in state legislatures."



SMARTER DUAL Camera Drive Recorder

Are Your Fleet Drivers Buckling Up?

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood recently announced that while seat belt use is at a record high of 84 percent nationwide, 45 million Americans are still not buckling up when riding in motor vehicles.

Fleet drivers who are not buckling up are not only violating the law, but they may also face consequences on the job. Since a majority of fleet managers have some kind of seat belt usage policy in place, a violation of this policy could obviously jeopardize a driver's employment.

Eli Lilly and Company conducts an annual MVR check for all authorized drivers and uses a point system to determine risk. Drivers with MVR events, accidents, or incidents receive training specific to their offense. But the company has most recently begun targeting their concern on seat belt safety.

"Because we are so concerned about seat belt use, we assign three (3) points for seat belt violations in the risk scoring system," said NAFA Member Beth Ann Stamer, Director, Health, Safety and Environment – Affiliates.

On any given day about 38 people who are not buckled-up are killed in motor vehicle crashes, according to statistics from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). In 2008 alone, nearly 14,000 unbuckled passenger vehicle occupants lost their lives on U.S. roadways. Nearly half of them could have been saved if they had been belted. NHTSA statistics also show that those least likely to buckle-up are teens, young adults, males, nighttime riders, motorists traveling on rural roads, and individuals traveling in pick-up trucks.

Employed drivers in Florida could face a 25 percent reduction in workers' compensation if they refused to wear a seat belt and were hurt on the job, according to the Florida's Workers' Compensation Law. In some companies in Florida the policy states that it is part of the supervisor's responsibility to enforce the use of protective equipment for the employees they supervise.

Most fleets enact a points system as a consequence to their drivers and sometimes the same amount of points for not wearing a seat belt will be equivalent to that of speeding.

"Occasionally we will see a seat-belt violation on the MVR results and the driver will have the applicable points added to their fleet record," said Jann Stapleton, Manager Corporate Fleet for Safeway in Phoenix, Ariz., and NAFA Member. Stapleton's company, Safeway, instills a mandatory seatbelt policy.

Even law enforcement officials employed in states where it is mandatory for front seat occupants to wear safety restraints are held responsible while they are driving on the job. In Cincinnati, if a police officer is involved in a crash then a Crash Data Recovery report is completed to determine if a seatbelt was in use. Discipline or a citation depends on the outcome of the verbal interview versus the data retrieved from the vehicle.

Currently 30 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands have primary seat belt laws and 19 states have secondary laws. [Click here](#) to view states with primary and secondary seat belt laws.

According to the [Almanac on Policy Issues](#), states with secondary enforcement average only 63 percent belt use but states with primary (standard) enforcement belt laws average 78 percent belt use.

"We've made great strides to get Americans to buckle up, but we must not rest on our laurels," said Secretary LaHood. "Not wearing your seat belt is a serious, life-threatening practice."



SMARTER *DUAL Video Recorder shows operator inside cab insuring seat belt usage.*

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A forthcoming federal rulemaking will seek to disqualify school bus drivers convicted of texting while driving from maintaining their commercial driver's licenses.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood announced the action in a two-day summit devoted to the topic of distracted driving in all modes of transportation.

The Department of Transportation (DOT) will also create a rulemaking that will consider banning text messaging and restricting the use of cell phones by truck and interstate bus operators.

Another rulemaking would consider making permanent restrictions on the use of cell phones and other electronic devices in rail operations. LaHood called on state and local governments to work with the DOT to reduce fatalities and crashes by making distracted driving part of their state highway plans, and by continuing to pass state and local laws against distracted driving in all types of vehicles, especially school buses.

But the federal government also moved to set an example by its own actions. President Obama signed an executive order directing federal employees not to engage in text messaging when driving government-owned vehicles; when using electronic equipment supplied by the government while driving; or when driving privately owned vehicles when they're on official government business.

The order also encourages federal contractors and others doing business with the government to adopt and enforce their own policies banning texting while driving on the job.

"This order sends a very clear signal to the American public that distracted driving is dangerous and unacceptable," LaHood said. "I fully expect that all 58,000 DOT employees and contractors will take this order seriously."

The summit brought together safety experts, researchers, industry representatives, elected officials and members of the public who shared their expertise, experiences and ideas for reducing distracted driving.

Speakers from around the nation led interactive sessions on a number of key topics, including the extent and impact of distracted driving, current research, regulations and best practices. People from 49 states participated in summit via Web.

The summit also featured a discussion with *Seventeen* magazine Editor-in-Chief Ann Shoket and young adults that explored the dangers of texting and driving.

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