



## Summary profile

of facts and statistics regarding

# DISTRACTED DRIVING

## What

### Cell phones

Using a cell phone while driving affects driving habits and performance and multiplies by approximately four the risk of collision. Moreover, driving while using a cell phone is analogous to driving while impaired by alcohol with regards to reaction times and collision risks.

Individuals who use a cell phone (everyday use) have a greater risk of being involved in an accident while driving.

At the wheel, hands-free devices are not much safer than hand-held devices.

### Distraction

Distraction is most frequently mentioned as the “main cause” of accidents resulting in bodily injuries, but it remains under-assessed.

Sources of distraction are varied and numerous (include more than phones and texting), and drivers should be made more aware of the complexity inherent to the task of driving to protect themselves from distraction.

Advertising signs can interfere with driving and increase the mental workload involved in driving a vehicle.

Aging results in a decreased ability to process the information on road signs, and the efficiency of information processing varies based on the number of signs and time available.

Even when drivers keep their eyes on the road and hands on the wheel, cognitive distraction can hinder safe driving. Cognitive distraction sources result in:

- ▶ stopped brain activity in certain areas necessary for safe driving;
- ▶ increased reaction times;
- ▶ missed information signs;
- ▶ decreased visual scanning (tunnel vision).

### Texting

Texting at the wheel is the main concern of Canadians regarding road safety.

Heavy vehicle drivers who text while driving are 20 times more likely of being involved in an accident than drivers who do not use a cell phone.

**Note:** In this document, the phrase “accident due to distraction” refers to any accident for which one of the probable causes, indicated as such on the supplemental accident report, is related to driver distraction.



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# Who

### Accidents resulting in bodily injuries

All drivers are exposed to distractions. However:

- ▶ older drivers (aged 75 or older) are proportionally more involved in accidents due to distraction than drivers in other age groups; and
- ▶ women are proportionally more involved in accidents due to distraction.

### Offences

Younger drivers (aged 20 to 44) and men are overrepresented among people convicted of an offence related to using a cell phone at the wheel.

# When

### Accidents resulting in bodily injuries

Accidents due to distraction are concentrated from noon to 6 p.m. (almost half of all accidents occur during these hours).

They are also concentrated in the months of May to September (almost half of all accidents occur during these months).

They are more frequent at the end of the week (Thursday and Friday).

# Where

### Rate of distraction

Distraction rates are higher in urban areas and in the Estrie and Outaouais regions.

### Accidents resulting in bodily injuries

Accidents due to distraction occur in all administrative regions but are in higher proportions:

- ▶ on main roads, at intersections and on roads where the speed limit is 50 km/h;
- ▶ when driving conditions are favourable (better conditions = less attention paid to driving);
- ▶ in Montréal, Laval and Montérégie.

### Offences

Offences related to using a cell phone at the wheel are more numerous in the Laval and Laurentides regions.

