



NTSB 2015 MOST WANTED TRANSPORTATION SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

DISCONNECT FROM DEADLY DISTRACTIONS

What is the issue?

Quite simply, drivers do not always have their minds on the road. Even pilots do not always have their minds on vital communications, instruments, or procedures. The same is true of vessel and train operators. Increasingly, the use of portable electronic devices (PEDs) while operating a vehicle are distracting us, posing a real threat in transportation.

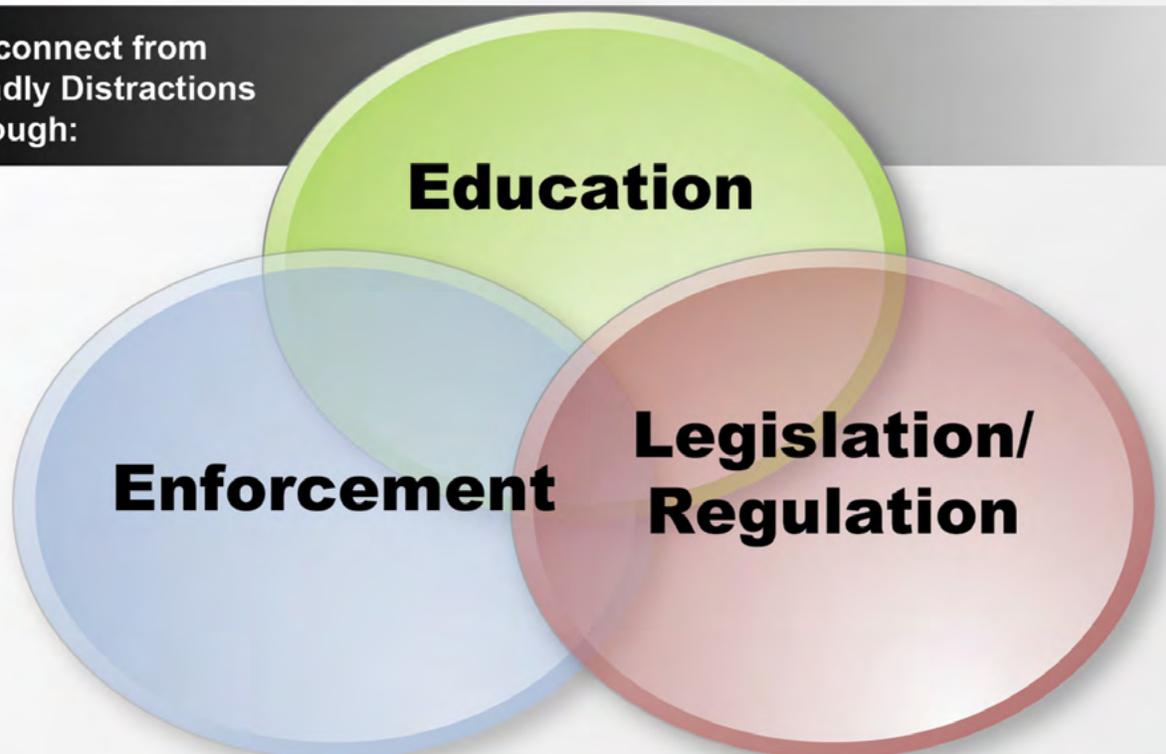
New connectivity has enabled new safety technologies. But it has also enabled new forms of distraction, leading to accidents and deaths, even in the most strictly regulated transportation enterprises. Since 2003, the NTSB has found PED distraction as a cause or contributing factor in 11 accident investigations. Those crashes resulted in 259 people injured and 50 people killed. And the NTSB does not investigate the majority of highway crashes. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports hundreds of such deaths on our highways in 2012 alone. According to NHTSA, drivers engaging in visual-manual tasks, such as dialing or texting, triple their risk of a crash.

Distraction can take many forms. In 2013, the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety reported that more than two out of three drivers indicated that they talked on a cell phone while driving within the past 30 days. More than one of three drivers admitted to reading a text message or e-mail while driving, and more than one of four drivers admitted to typing or sending a text or e-mail.

In addition, the AAA Foundation reports that hands-free is not risk-free. A driver's level of cognitive distraction is about equal whether using a hands-free or hand-held cell phone. Even voice-based systems may not eliminate distraction, and may have unintended effects on traffic safety.

PEDs are here to stay. We anticipate that distraction will continue to be a problem until regulators, industry, and the public embrace the concept of distraction-free transportation.

**Disconnect from
Deadly Distractions
through:**



DISCONNECT FROM DEADLY DISTRACTIONS

What can be done?

The first step toward removing deadly distractions will be to disconnect from non-mission-critical information. For decades, aviation has recognized the need for “sterile cockpit” procedures that restrict activities and conversations to the task at hand. But all modes of transportation need to rise to today’s distraction challenges. That’s why in December 2011 we called for a ban on all PED use while driving. We have issued similar recommendations for aviation, marine, and rail.

The public agrees. A June 2014 poll by the National Safety Council showed that 73% of drivers think there should be more enforcement of texting laws, while only 22% said the current level of enforcement is fine. And according to a AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety survey the majority of Americans (88.5 percent) feel that a driver talking on a cell phone represents a somewhat or a serious threat to their personal safety.

But currently only 14 states and the District of Columbia ban the use of hand-held cell phones while driving. The District of Columbia and 37 states restrict the use of cell phones by novice drivers, and 44 states and the District of Columbia ban text messaging while driving. None ban the use of hands-free devices.

Ultimately, a cultural shift will be required, and it must begin with each of us. Surveys repeatedly show that we know that PED distraction is dangerous while driving, yet we admit to indulging. It’s time to do what we know is right, and disconnect from deadly distractions.

Our PEDs make it possible to connect to information anytime and anywhere. But when driving is not the time, and behind the wheel is not the place – nor is the cockpit, the bridge of a vessel, or at the controls of a train.



Critical changes
needed to reduce
transportation
accidents
and save lives



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The NTSB’s Most Wanted List highlights safety issues identified from the NTSB’s accident investigations to increase awareness about the issues and recommended safety solutions.

The National Transportation Safety Board is an independent Federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant accidents in other modes of transportation - railroad, highway, marine and pipeline. The NTSB determines the probable cause of the accidents and issues safety recommendations aimed at preventing future accidents. In addition, the NTSB carries out special studies concerning transportation safety and coordinates the resources of the Federal Government and other organizations to provide assistance to victims and their family members impacted by major transportation disasters.

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