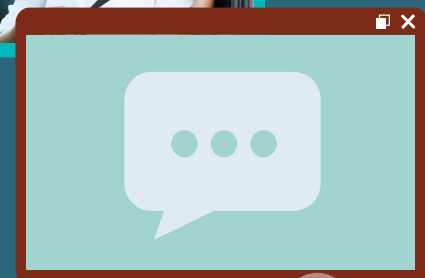
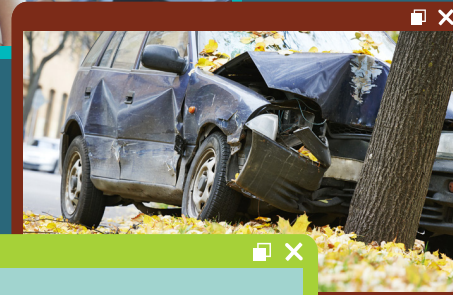


IN ONE INSTANT

AWARD-WINNING
TEEN SAFE DRIVING
PROGRAM



IN ONE INSTANT

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IN ONE INSTANT

THE BEST TEEN SAFE DRIVING PROGRAM FOR VIRTUAL OR IN-PERSON LEARNING

In One Instant empowers your students to make smart choices and save lives by reducing distracted and reckless driving.

This emotionally charged, award-winning program makes the issues timely and personal, compelling your students to own their decisions - while influencing peers, parents, and siblings to do the same.

More than 3,000 high schools nationwide have implemented In One Instant. It's designed around the Health Belief Model, which says people change behaviors when they believe themselves to be at risk for more serious consequences. The program persuades by depicting realistic risks, then providing tools needed to change behaviors.

Start with our 33-minute video (with link for virtual screening), the springboard to behavior change. Teachers and student leaders follow the video screening with virtual/in-classroom discussions, activities, and games providing teens with the tools they need for long-lasting change. These tools are entertaining, informative, and meet Common Core Standards.

Follow-up activities determine success! Whether you have ten minutes or a couple of class periods, please use the follow-up activities with your students immediately after the video program. We've provided this guide to help.

Teens often tell us that they want to speak up in unsafe situations, but they're afraid of looking uncool. It's why the follow-up activities are so important! These conversations and role-plays provide a safe place to voice concerns in ways that feel natural and socially acceptable.

We encourage you to begin the follow-up activities immediately after screening the video. But you can implement them throughout the semester or school year. They include flexible and fun activities for virtual or in-person use, and can be student-led.

THANK YOU for your caring investment in these life-saving lessons!



“

“To this day, the emotional impact of In One Instant has prevented me from making stupid choices, not only behind the wheel, but in every aspect of my life.”

- Student

”

IN ONE INSTANT

VIDEO INTRODUCTION

Our video program opens with a familiar and relatable story, drawing students in as they empathize with the characters.

The narrative begins when our teenage characters ditch first period. An impromptu birthday celebration leads to drinking in the car and texting behind the wheel. Then: A violent collision. Desperation inside the ambulance. The driver's arrest. Doctors give a crushing report to a crash victim's parent, as police deliver an even more somber report to another.

Later, parents and peers testify in the courtroom, stirring the driver to a heart wrenching apology. Prison bars swing shut, locking him behind the weight of his choices.

Teens have told us time and time again how emotionally involved they become with this story, feeling as if they have actually lost a friend or gone to jail – all because of one stupid choice.

Students are equally moved by a young crash survivor who tells his true story of being transformed from a typical and confident teen to a young adult living with brain damage, thanks to texting and driving. More survivors and families share their personal stories. Real high school students, imagining they had been collision victims, tell what they would do differently. All reinforce the many ways driving decisions can change lives forever.

We underscore the power of choice and celebrate the richness life has to offer with an inspiring and life-affirming montage set to Beyoncé's "I Was Here," which she generously donated as a show of support.

Finally, we deliver a Call to Action, emphasizing the behaviors we encourage teens to adopt, suggesting how to:

Refrain from cell phone use/texting while driving

- Always use a seatbelt
- Stand up to peer pressure
- Refrain from driving when impaired
- Pre-plan a safe drive home
- Serve as ambassadors to their peers and be part of the solution

The teacher or a pre-selected student leader can be selected to conclude the program by inviting everyone to take the Vow to Live Pledge, which stays on-screen:

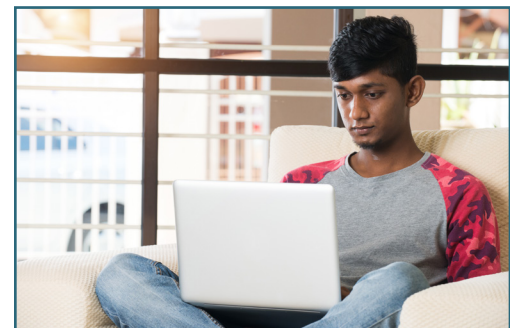
"I vow to live a life that will last. A life in which I will not drive under the influence. I will not drive recklessly and I will not drive while texting. I will make sure my friends and family know to do the same. I vow to live a life I can be proud of."

- J. Barnett, 18



Here's how we utilize the Health Belief Model:

Our video program encourages teens to grapple with their illusions of invincibility by giving teens the skills they need to make safer choices when their brains are most receptive.



PRE & POST-PROGRAM SURVEYS

Car crashes are the leading cause of death for teens and young adults. It is critical for traffic safety programs to contribute toward behavior change and encourage young people to consider their actions and choices behind the wheel. The In One Instant Teen Safe Driving Program is rooted in data and includes 2 **anonymous** surveys to track and understand behavior change before and after the program.

1. **Before** you implement the program, have your students complete the short, anonymous PRE-PROGRAM SURVEY, available on www.inoneinstant.org/pre-survey
2. **After** your students have completed the program and follow-up activities, direct them to the **anonymous** POST-PROGRAM SURVEY, available on www.inoneinstant.org/post-survey

STUDENT ACTIVITY #1: DYNAMIC POST-VIDEO PEER-DRIVEN DISCUSSIONS

**Optimal Software
Program for Success:**

Microsoft Teams Blue Jeans
Zoom WebEx

Time Required: Variable, 10 – 60 Minutes

OBJECTIVE:

Immediately after your students have experienced the In One Instant video program, it's crucial to follow-up with a discussion. The video opens their minds, but the discussion drives the point home. It provides a safe space where students can talk about their feelings and a much-needed respite - debriefing students while empowering them to create their own solutions. Students can participate in follow-up discussions in a large group setting or separated into breakout groups with an advisor and peers (these can be done virtually).

You'll Need:

- "Talking Piece" (any item that students can hold while speaking to facilitate group discussion)
- Timer - if needed, we recommend using www.online-stopwatch.com

LEADING THE DISCUSSION - PART 1

Suggested Software: (Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Blue Jeans, & WebEx)

1. You may want to share a few key statistics about distracted driving from: www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/teen-driving
2. Break students into groups of six to eight (depending on how much time you have) virtual breakout group sessions to ensure that every student has a chance to speak. Provide each virtual group session with a "talking piece" to each group.
3. Introduce the first discussion prompt: "What was the most impactful part of the video program and how will it change your behavior?"
4. Set the timer for six to eight minutes (depending on the group size) and let the students talk. Each student should have up to one minute to speak. After every minute of discussion, call time to indicate that the next person should start speaking. (If everyone finishes speaking before the minute is up, feel free to move on.)
5. After the first discussion, choose a number of other prompts (below) as time allows. Reset the timer and repeat this process until you have ten minutes left, then proceed to Part 2.

First Prompt: "What was the most impactful part of the video program and how will it change your behavior?"

(*Win prizes when you record the answers and share with In One Instant at: info@inoneinstant.org)

LEADING THE DISCUSSION - PART 2

6. After several rounds of small group discussion, have students either stay in their groups or regroup in one large virtual session. Review a few prompts that were discussed in their groups with the class.

**If forming one large session, give the "talking piece" to the first person willing to share what their group had to say, then proceed to the next student who wants to talk on the video conference.*

*** To save time, you may have students remain in their groups. Have one student per group summarize what was discussed. In this case you would have one team representative, eliminating the need for the "Talking Piece."*

7. Lead the discussion for as long as you can, addressing the topics you asked them to discuss in groups.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION PROMPTS

(in order of importance):

- How do you feel when other drivers are texting near you?
- What will you do to prevent someone from driving impaired or texting while driving?
- How do you avoid giving in to peer pressure?
- How can you voice your concerns and be taken seriously?
- How will you arrange for a safe drive home?
- What's your emergency plan in case your arranged plan falls through?
- Do you ever feel like it's dangerous being in the car with certain individuals?
- What would you do to avoid being in that situation?
- When was your last "near miss" from texting?
- Do you have an example of a time in your life when you stopped someone from texting while driving or driving impaired? (Please ask students not to use names.)
- Give an example when you failed to stop someone? How did it make you feel?



STUDENT ACTIVITY #2:

VIRTUAL ROLE-PLAY

Optimal Software
Program for Success:

Microsoft Teams Blue Jeans
Zoom WebEx

Time Required: 15– 45 Minutes

OBJECTIVE:

The classroom role-play is a fantastic activity for virtual or in-classroom. Email or direct message students their designated roles. Then encourage them to play out the scenes with other participants on the virtual conference, or in classroom. (Ensure that speakers are the only individuals unmuted and populating the screen!)

Through role-play, students learn how to voice their concerns in uncomfortable and challenging situations, stepping into someone else's shoes - in a safe environment. The below scenarios will empower your students to stand up to peer pressure and own their decisions.

You'll Need:

- Scenario cards (provided after these instructions)
- Timer (we recommend using www.online-stopwatch.com)
- **Enthusiasm!**

IT'S EASY! *(Even for the theatrically challenged):*

1. You'll need volunteers for the scenarios to be effective. If there are no volunteers, pick students who are confident or engaging.
2. We've supplied four possible scenarios, each ranging from two to four people. Do as many scenarios as time allows. Feel free to create your own in addition.
3. After selecting the students for each group, give them their scenario cards. *(Distribute these prompts via email or direct message amongst your student groups).*

Students will only have 5 minutes to read their scenario cards, assign roles, and prepare a rough idea of how it will play out. Each virtual break-out group should prepare separately. Emphasize that scenes will be improvisational.
4. Pick one group to go first and set a timer, allowing about three minutes to perform.
5. You may want to stop the scenario once or twice at key times as you see fit, or at conclusion, to ask the class questions like:
 - a. *What is the conflict?*
 - b. *Are the people escalating the conflict or taking steps to resolve it?*
 - c. *What could that person have said instead?*
 - d. *What worked? What didn't work?*
 - e. *What would you have done or said differently?*
 - f. *Did the role-playing represent what would happen in real life?*

SCENARIO CARDS:

Distribute these prompts via email or direct message amongst your student groups.

1. Sam is having relationship stress and the two are texting each other – but the erratic driving is making the other passengers uncomfortable. Sam wants to fix the relationship, but after a few heated texts back and forth, the car starts veering into another lane. Will the passengers intervene? How?
 - a. **Role 1)** *Sam, the driver, is texting his/her ex.*
 - b. **Role 2)** *Parker wants to take the phone from Sam.*
 - c. **Role 3)** *Tracy agrees with Parker.*
 - d. **Role 4)** *Casey supports Sam’s “right” to text and drive.*
2. Alex and Dylan are on their way to the neighboring town for the big animal shelter fundraiser. They’re in charge of setting it up, but they’re late. Again. Their supervisor has already called twice. With all the tables in the trunk of Alex’s car, no one can set up without them. Alex starts driving faster, weaving in and out of traffic. After nearly hitting another car, Dylan realizes that he needs to stop Alex’s behavior. How should Dylan handle the situation?
 - a. **Role 1)** *Alex, the driver*
 - b. **Role 2)** *Dylan, the passenger*
3. Jesse is driving three friends on their way back from a major football win against their rival school. One passenger cranks the volume on the radio and is dancing in the seat. Food is being passed around. One passenger is on the phone with their friend who missed everything and wants to hear what happened. Another passenger is honking Jesse’s horn – it’s all fun and games, but Jesse is on edge and getting distracted. What should Jesse say or do to get the passengers to calm down?
 - a. **Role 1)** *Jesse, the driver*
 - b. **Role 2)** *Morgan, the front seat passenger. Window down, head out, dancing in seat while screaming celebrations at passing cars.*
 - c. **Role 3)** *Tyler in the backseat, sitting behind Jesse. Leaning forward and honking the horn. Cranking up the radio.*
 - d. **Role 4)** *Chris, on the phone, yelling to friend. Passing food.*
4. Taylor is supposed to drive two friends home, but probably shouldn’t get behind the wheel. As Taylor, Ryan, and Jamie are about to leave the party, Jamie questions whether Taylor should be driving. Taylor insists: “I’m good to go!” Ryan suggests that they spend the night, but Taylor has to be home before curfew and neither of the other two have their licenses. How will they get home?
 - a. **Role 1)** *Taylor, the driver, insists on driving.*
 - b. **Role 2)** *Jamie struggles to convince the other two that they shouldn’t be driving. Suggests alternative after alternative; has parents who wouldn’t be angry if they got a phone call asking for a ride.*
 - c. **Role 3)** *Ryan, who eventually agrees with Jamie, argues about the alternatives. Doesn’t want any parents involved.*

Disclaimer: We recognize that underage drinking is illegal, however, statistics show that impaired driving continues to be a problem for teens. The scenario above gives students a forum to learn how to influence their friends to make smarter choices.

STUDENT ACTIVITY #3:

DRIVING IN JEOPARDY

Optimal Software Program for Success:

Microsoft Teams Blue Jeans
Zoom WebEx

Time Required: 10– 40 Minutes

OBJECTIVE:

Driving in Jeopardy is a fun, team-based quiz game that can involve the whole class! The objective is to inform students with unexpected truths and fun facts, with the hope that they'll share their newfound knowledge with friends and family. It's competitive, engaging, and easy to implement. Students can utilize real time response feedback software and website such as www.mentimeter.com or www.polleverywhere.com to collect answers or participate in polls.

Students are able to compete against their friends virtually, and with the share of an educator's screen, watch how they are ranking in the Driving in Jeopardy tournament.

How it works:

1. Read aloud the first Truth or Myth from the pages provided.
2. Students have five seconds to vote in the app if they think it's true or if they think it's a myth.
3. Identify how many people voted on each choice.
4. Then, tell the class if it was a truth or myth.
5. If it's true or a myth, the number of people who voted correctly is equal to the number of points they will win.
6. Proceed through as many Truth or Myths as time permits, leaving time at the end for a Lightning Round.

LIGHTNING ROUND!

7. Instead of reading the Truth or Myth cards, move to the Lightning Round questions.
8. Place each student in teams or virtual breakout groups. Give 60 seconds to collaborate on the questions. One student should submit the answer.
9. At the end of 60 seconds, each team must come to the main virtual conference room and review their answers. The number of correct items listed equals the number of points each team earns.



TRUE / FALSE STATEMENTS:

- 1. Teens who smoke are more likely to get into a crash than their nonsmoking peers.**
Answer: True
Explanation: Smoking and driving may seem like they should be unrelated, but actually teens who smoke are twice as likely to get into a car crash than teens who don't smoke.
- 2. It's safer to talk to a passenger in your car than talk on the phone while driving.**
Answer: True
Explanation: A person on the other end of the phone doesn't know what's happening in the car, but a passenger can pause conversation when the driving gets tricky.
- 3. Being awake for 18 hours has the same effect on your driving as being drunk.**
Answer: True
Explanation: Driving drowsy can be just as dangerous as driving drunk – both slow your reaction times, impair your judgment, and drastically increase your risk of a crash.
- 4. You're more likely to be cautious if you have to pay your own car insurance or repair bills.**
Answer: True
Explanation: Paying for a car's expenses is a big responsibility, and teens who pay their bills are more likely to stay safe and take good care of their car.
- 5. Your phone is the only distracting thing in the car.**
Answer: False
Explanation: There are lots of distractions in the car! Even looking in your rear-view mirror for too long can be a distraction.
- 6. When you pass your driver's test, you have the skills to drive safely in all conditions.**
Answer: False
Explanation: Being a driver takes years of practicing engaged driving skills. Even some adults are bad drivers!
- 7. You're less likely to be in a collision if you own your own car.**
Answer: False
Explanation: Teens who have to ask for keys or share them with a sibling are statistically more inclined to take extra precautions while driving.
- 8. Teens are the most likely age group to get behind the wheel if impaired.**
Answer: False
Explanation: Adults are! The caveat is that if teens drive drunk, they're significantly more likely to get into a crash.
- 9. As a new driver, it's safer to have a friend in the car.**
Answer: False
Explanation: Teen crash risk increases with every additional teen passenger.
- 10. Alcohol is the leading cause of teen auto fatalities.**
Answer: False
Explanation: 1 in 3 teen fatalities are caused by drinking, while distracted driving is the number one cause of teen auto fatalities.

11. **Seatbelt use is a major factor in teen driving fatalities.**
Answer: True
Explanation: 47% of all teen car crash fatalities are the result of not properly using a seat belt.
12. **Sending a text is safer than talking on the phone while driving.**
Answer: False
Explanation: Texting takes a person's eyes off the road for an average of 5 seconds. Driving at 55mph, that's like driving the length of a football field blindfolded.
13. **It's safer for teens to drive at night because there is less traffic on the road.**
Answer: False
Explanation: While there may be less traffic on the road, the most dangerous time to drive for teens is from 9pm to midnight. They may be more tired, driving faster to meet a curfew – plus it's harder to see any obstacles in the road.
14. **Most speeding-related fatalities occur on interstate highways.**
Answer: False
Explanation: Almost 90% of speeding-related fatalities occur on roads other than interstate highways.
15. **Drivers should always go the speed limit in order to maximize safety on the road.**
Answer: False
Explanation: Speed limits are set for perfect driving conditions. Inclement weather or congested traffic requires a slower speed in order to drive safely.
16. **Most fatigue-related crashes involve drivers 30-65.**
Answer: False
Explanation: Drivers under 25 are responsible for most crashes caused by drowsy driving.
17. **Teens need 8 hours of sleep in order to be safe drivers.**
Answer: True
Explanation: Teen drivers who sleep less than eight hours per night are a 1/3 more likely to get into a car crash than teens who sleep eight or more hours per night.

THREE LIGHTNING ROUND QUESTIONS:

1. **Name as many in-car distractions as you can.**
Possible Answers: cell phone, CD player, radio, passengers, makeup, people/ objects outside the car, food & drinks, laptops, books, magazines, newspapers, strong emotions, pets, looking at rear-view mirrors for too long, reaching for something, tiredness
2. **What are the steps a person should do in the car before starting to drive?**
Possible Answers: Adjust side and rear-view mirrors, put away cell phone, change music, clean windshield, buckle up, adjust seat, defrost windshield, turn on heat/air conditioning, program GPS
3. **Name things a driver should do while driving.**
Possible Answers: Scanning, checking mirrors, watch for obstructions in roadway, be respectful to other drivers, maintain a safe following distance, obey the speed limit, look for red light or stop sign runners.

STUDENT ACTIVITY #4: READING AND ESSAYING

Optimal Software
Program for Success:

Microsoft Teams Blue Jeans
Zoom WebEx

Time Required: 30– 60 Minutes

OBJECTIVE:

Some students are verbal or linguistic learners and best absorb the material when they're asked to read and write about a subject. To meet their needs, we've included an engaging essay about distracted driving from Huffington Post's Kevin Short (found in Appendix), and additional essay topics to share. Have your students read and analyze this article. Then ask them to write an essay of their own (or contribute to a virtual response platform such as www.mentimeter.com or www.polleverywhere.com for real time responses.)

Analysis Questions:

- What are the central ideas of this essay?
- What is the author's point of view?
- Is the author's rhetoric effective? What concepts did he use to build his argument? What emotional devices did he utilize? Could he have done anything differently?
- What data sources does the author use? How could different sources change the tone of the essay?
- Who is the author's audience? What techniques does the author use to appropriately address the audience?

Essay Topics:

- How can we change the culture around texting and driving? If science and statistics haven't impacted people's actions, what would work?
- What compels a society to follow the law? Can laws more effectively change the culture of texting and driving? If so, how?

To view Kevin Short's Essay, see the Appendix.



VIRTUAL ADVOCACY & DIGITAL PROJECTS

Optimal Software Program for Success:

Microsoft Teams Blue Jeans
Zoom WebEx

Students are able to create virtual advocacy materials or design digital creative activities that students can present to their peers during later sessions, throughout the school year. Students can encourage their peers to practice safe driving by making videos, graphics, poetry, etc. **Share with the In One Instant community and be part of the solution!**

Go to our Be Heard Gallery www.inoneinstant.org/heard/gallery.html

Below are some examples of virtual advocacy materials or digital creative activities, and an estimated number of hours achieved for community service:

CREATE A GRAPHIC & SPREAD THE "VOW TO LIVE PLEDGE"

1 Community Service Hour

Take the pledge, get involved, and save a life. Visit inoneinstant.org/pledge and post the pledge on all of your social media sites, including Facebook, Tik Tok, Twitter, and Instagram!

MAKE A REACTION VIDEO

1 Community Service Hour

Record your reaction after experiencing the In One Instant video program using your smartphone camera. The person on-screen should state their answers in complete sentences. Make sure to shoot these videos in an area with no audio interference. Here's the question you should answer: *"What was the most impactful part of the video program and how will it change your behavior?"* Share it with your friends on social media!

CREATE A SLOGAN

1 Community Service Hour

You know that really clever slogan AT&T made, *"It Can Wait"*? We want you to give them a run for their money. If you create a unique safe driving slogan that feels fresh, compelling, and insightful - bring it to your community service liaison for an hour of community service and share on social media!

DESIGN A POSTER

2 Community Service Hours

Here's one for the visual artists. Pretend your interning at an ad agency and create a promotional poster for safe driving. Share it with your school and community to earn two hours of community service! Don't forget to send it to us and we'll post it on our social media!

WRITE AND PUBLISH

3 Community Service Hours

Calling all student journalists! Write an article related to distracted, impaired, or reckless driving and publish it in the local paper (even if it's a letter to the editor). If you send us a link, we'll post it on our social media!

POEMS / SPOKEN WORD

3-4 Community Service Hours

There have been some fantastic poems written about distracted driving over the past few years. If you can add to the pedigree, your community service liaison will award you with three hours of community service. If you perform it live (or create a video of your performance), your community service liaison will award you four hours! Example of an excellent spoken word performance: www.weareteachers.com/poetry-videos-for-middle-and-high-school/

WRITE AND PERFORM A SONG

4 Community Service Hours

Do you ever write songs? Whether it's on an acoustic guitar, keyboard - or a rap - perform an original song about safe driving and you'll earn four hours of community service. If you submit it to us, we'll post it on our social media and you'll be one step closer to YouTube fame! Funny example of a rap about texting: www.youtube.com/watch?v=FWj42BxDXCU

CREATE A POWERFUL PSA

5 Community Service Hours

For the budding filmmakers: create a 30 second PSA that promotes safe driving. It can be funny or serious - as long as no one actually texts behind the wheel! It should communicate effective ways to become safer drivers. Below are a number of sentences you and your friends can complete. You can record yourself (or have a family member) as you recite a sentence you've just created in front of the camera. It's easy! But make sure not to face the sun while you're recording and don't look down to read your answers!

- **I don't text and drive because**

- **When I see my parents text and drive I say:**

- **When I see my friends text and drive I say**

- **Texting and driving go together like :**

- **Not wearing a seatbelt? I say:**

- **Create your own:**

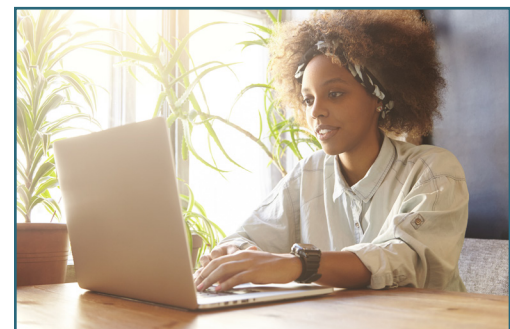
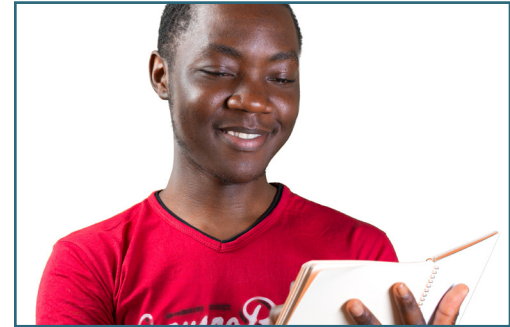
***NOTE:** You may only use original music, songs that are in the public domain, music offered free for educational and/or nonprofit purposes, or tunes, that you've licensed. That means no Beyoncé or Jay-Z in the background - unless you can get the rights.

Try: mobygratis.com for free music.

IN ONE INSTANT

HELPFUL FACTS & RESOURCES

- **NHTSA Young Driver Crash Facts:**
www.crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812968
- **Teen Driver Safety Statistics:**
www.cdc.gov/transportationsafety/teen_drivers/teendriv_ers_factsheet.html
- **Dopamine and Teenage Logic - The Atlantic**
The role of dopamine in teens' developing brains and how it affects their decision-making.
www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/01/dopamineand-teenage-logic/282895/
- **Distracted Driving and Risk of Road Crashes Among Novice and Experienced Drivers - New England Journal of Medicine**
A study on the relationship between distracting activities while driving and the risk of crashes or near-crashes in teens and experienced adult drivers.
www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMsa1204142#t=abstract



APPENDIX

STATES COMBAT CELL PHONE USE ON THE ROAD BUT DEATHS PERSIST

By Kevin Short

Citizens and lawmakers nationwide are increasingly aware that using a cell phone while driving is the safety equivalent of taking the wheel after a few drinks. Yet despite a legislative and educational push to end distracted driving, Americans remain stubbornly unwilling to put down their digital devices, with progressively lethal consequences.

In 2015, the most recent year in which data is available, 3,477 people were killed in automobile crashes involving a distracted driver, according to data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Association, and an estimated additional 391,000 injured in crashes involving distracted drivers. The fatal crash rate for teens is 3 times greater than for drivers age 20 and over (IIHS)

When distractions were identified, cell phones were often a leading cause. And most experts say these statistics are vastly underreported, meaning that thousands more lives a year are almost certainly being claimed by an epidemic whose causes are already well understood.

This is not for lack of laws on the books. In the four years since The New York Times published a Pulitzer prize-winning series on distracted driving, most states have enacted some form of prohibition on talking or texting on cell phones while behind the wheel.

Some 47 states plus the District of Columbia now have a ban on texting while driving, according to a survey released this week by the Governors Highway Safety Association, a nonprofit association representing the highway safety offices of each state. However, only 16 states and D.C. require drivers to use a hands-free device while talking on the phone. A total of 47 states report some form of enforcement protocol and public outreach effort aimed at limiting such practices, with the only holdouts being Arizona, South Carolina and Montana.

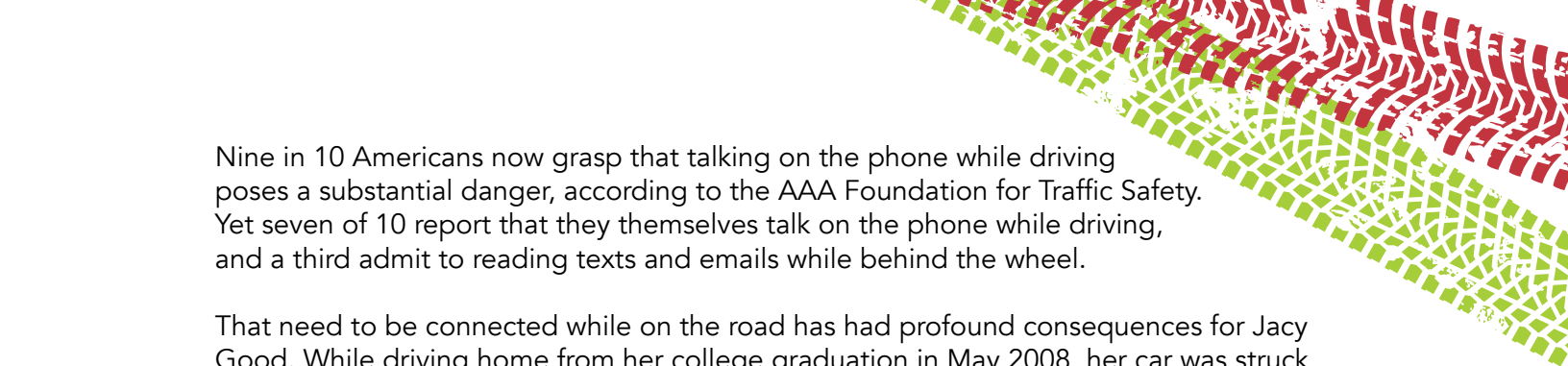
And yet this legislative response has failed to reverse the trend. According to the GHSA's study, 15 states say their distracted driving crashes have increased, 11 say they have decreased and 16 report the same rate of crashes.

"Restrictions on cell phone use do not appear to be making the crashes go down faster in states that have the laws," Russ Rader, senior vice president at the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, a driving research organization, told The Huffington Post.

Paradoxically, Rader added, cell phone bans appear to reduce instances of people using their phones while driving, yet that fails to translate into a "corresponding effect on crash risk."

According to the NHTSA, using a cell phone while driving multiplies the risk of crashing by a factor of four, effectively making the practice as dangerous as driving with a blood-alcohol concentration of 0.08 –the legal limit under drunk driving laws. Texting while driving amplifies that risk as much as 23 times.

Dozens of studies have shown that using a hands-free device -- currently prescribed by 11 states that ban driving while using a hand-held phone -- is in fact equally, if not more dangerous, than holding the phone.



Nine in 10 Americans now grasp that talking on the phone while driving poses a substantial danger, according to the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. Yet seven of 10 report that they themselves talk on the phone while driving, and a third admit to reading texts and emails while behind the wheel.

That need to be connected while on the road has had profound consequences for Jacy Good. While driving home from her college graduation in May 2008, her car was struck by a semi-truck swerving to avoid a reckless driver talking on his cell phone. Both of her parents were killed instantly, and Good was left with lifelong handicaps.

"It's an addiction. The laws have to be in place, but it has to go beyond that because obviously people aren't complying with those laws," Good told The Huffington Post. "It comes down to the social standards we set for ourselves; it needs to be as unacceptable as drunk driving."

Even as the lethal consequences of this reality grow, so do the temptations to look away from the road and focus on a screen as the current of constant, 24/7 connectivity reaches further into every crevice of American life. Consumers increasingly expect to be wired and available for digital communication wherever the road takes them.

So-called infotainment systems included in cars will expand fivefold over the next five years, according to a forecast from the Automobile Association of America. The car is increasingly becoming a mobile office, social news feed and multimedia hub.

"There is a looming public safety crisis ahead with the future proliferation of these in-vehicle technologies," said AAA President and CEO Robert L. Darbelnet in the report last month. "It's time to consider limiting new and potentially dangerous mental distractions built into cars, particularly with the common public misperception that hands-free means risk-free."

Overall, car accidents have steadily declined since 1975, yet the grave consequences of phone use while driving pull in the opposite direction, remaining stubbornly consistent.

The extent of the problem amounts to a crude science. Experts say data about distracted driving crashes is woefully inaccurate. The National reviewed 180 fatal cell-phone related crashes from 2009-2011. Of these, only half were recorded in the federal data. Even in cases when the driver admitted to cell phone use, only 50 percent of the crashes were properly coded.

These systemic flaws -- in addition to crashes when there are no witnesses, a driver lies about phone use or the police do not ask about distractions -- have led the NSC to estimate that a quarter of all crashes involve phones, a figure far higher than the governmental estimate.

Most states have been making a push to limit such fatalities, taking their cue from The New York Times series and resulting public furor. Some 39 states plus D.C. now identify distracted driving as a priority issue, up from 28 states in 2010. More states than ever are collecting crash data, trying to enforce the state law and launching media campaigns.

"The science is out there, and we're ignoring it," Good said. "This is absolutely preventable ... there's nothing on your phone that is more important than the life I wanted to live or the lives of my parents."

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