

Status and Outlook of the Driver Distraction Problem in the US:

A Ministry Perspective

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Scope of the Problem: All Distraction

- 3,311 fatalities in distraction-affected crashes in 2011
 - About 10 percent of all traffic deaths
- Increased by 1.9 percent between 2010 and 2011

Scope of the Problem: Cell Phones

- About 400 fatalities associated with phone use
- Observed in traffic:
 - 5 percent of drivers using handheld phones
 - 1 percent texting
- Public Concern
 - Celebrity campaigns
 - Victims organizations
 - Active legislatures

Countermeasure Strategies: Behavior

- Strong laws and law enforcement
 - 39 States with texting laws
 - 10 States with handheld phone laws
- Model texting law
- Demonstration and Evaluation Programs
 - Benefits of high-visibility enforcement
 - Techniques for enforcing texting laws

Countermeasure Strategies: Vehicle

- Proposed guidelines for in-vehicle equipment
 - Performance standards for visual and manual effects
- Developing guidelines for portable equipment

Challenge: Problem Identification

- Policy remains ahead of science
 - Action imperative
- Precise measures of risk remain elusive
 - Estimates vary by research type
- Policy debate regarding hands-free phone use

Challenge: Data

- Observation surveys
 - identifying hands-free phone use
- Crash Reports
 - Determining pre-crash behavior
 - Estimating role in crash causation

Challenge: Policy

- Varying viewpoints on role of cognitive distraction
- Question regarding displacement
 - Does prohibiting texting & handheld phone use encourage hands-free?
- Expanding market for driver information and entertainment devices

Experiences in Other Nations?

Thank you