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TxDOT's four goals: Maintain a safe system, address congestion, connect Texas communities, and be a Best-in-Class state agency

## Distracted Driving Key Messages

- **Distracted driving is a serious issue and the cause of an increasing number of traffic crashes and fatalities.**
  - In 2012, there were 90,378 traffic crashes in Texas that involved distracted driving (distraction, driver inattention or cell-phone use). These crashes resulted in 18,468 serious injuries and 453 deaths. (TxDOT)
  - Nearly 1 in 4 crashes involves driver distraction in Texas. (TxDOT)
  
- **A driver's reaction time is doubled when reading or sending a text message. (TTI)**
  - To put that into perspective, sending or receiving a text takes a driver's eyes from the road for an average of 4.6 seconds, the equivalent of driving the length of an entire football field, blind at 55 mph. (2009, VTTI)
  
- **Safety is TxDOT's No. 1 priority. As such, we have developed the Talk. Text. Crash. campaign to encourage Texans to drive without distractions — no talking or texting.**
  - Throughout the month of April (National Distracted Driving Awareness Month) TxDOT will air radio, online video, web banners, mobile banners and cable ads that remind drivers to put away their phones before driving. TxDOT will also hold community events to educate the public.
  - This year's campaign will demonstrate to Texans how hard it is to complete tasks —like texting — while walking. The goal is to show that if people cannot text and walk without having an accident, they surely should not text and drive.
  - Messages educate drivers on the dangers of distracted driving.
  
- **Drivers hold the key to driving safely. Through the Talk. Text. Crash. campaign and others, we continue to remind drivers of these simple steps to stay safe on the road:**
  - **Always buckle up.**
  - **Drive a safe speed** (that takes traffic, road conditions and weather into account).
  - **Stop at stop signs and red lights.**
  - **Pass carefully.**
  - **Pay attention** (focus 100 percent on driving, which means no talking or texting on cell phones or engaging in other distracting behaviors).
  - **Never drink and drive.**

## Additional Stats

- **In Texas and across the nation, cellphone use is one of the major causes of distracted driving-related traffic accidents and fatalities.**
  - In 2012, there were 90,378 traffic crashes in Texas that involved distracted driving to date (distraction, driver inattention or cell-phone use). These crashes resulted in 18,468 serious injuries and 453 deaths. (TxDOT)
    - From 2011 to 2012, there was an 8-percent increase of traffic crashes in Texas that involved distraction, driver inattention or cellphone use. (TxDOT)
    - From 2011 to 2012, there was a 9-percent increase of traffic fatalities in Texas that involved distraction, driver inattention or cellphone use. (TxDOT)
  - Using a cellphone while driving delays your reaction time as much as having a blood alcohol concentration of .08, the legal limit for drunk driving. (NHTSA)
  - Drivers who use a hand-held device are 4 times more likely to get into a crash serious enough to cause injury. A texting driver is 23 times more likely to get into an accident than a non-texting driver. (2009, VTTI)
  - In the month of June 2011, more than 196 billion text messages were sent or received in the U.S., up nearly 50 percent from June 2009. (CTIA)
  - In 2012, 46.7 percent of Texas drivers admit to regularly or sometimes talking on a cell phone while driving. However, 84.9 percent of Texas drivers think drivers talking on a cell phone are a very serious or somewhat serious threat to their personal safety. (TTI)
  - In 2012, 23.5 percent of Texas drivers admit to regularly or sometimes reading or sending a text message while driving. However, 93.8 percent of Texas drivers think drivers text messaging or emailing are a very serious or somewhat serious threat to their personal safety. (TTI)
  
- **Distracted driving-related crashes and fatalities are highest among young adults and adults over the age of 45 in Texas.**
  - Out of the 90,378 2012 traffic crashes in Texas that involved distracted driving:
    - 28,443 were ages 16-24. (TxDOT)
    - 23,784 involved distracted drivers over the age of 45. (TxDOT)
    - 19,567 involved distracted drivers ages 25-34. (TxDOT)
    - 13,029 involved distracted drivers ages 35-44. (TxDOT)

## Media Q&A

*The following Q&A responses can be used by campaign spokespeople. These are intended to address questions about the campaign. Spokespeople will also draw from the messaging above.*

### **Q: What is distracted driving?**

**A:** Distracted driving is any activity that could divert a person's attention away from the primary task of driving. Distractions include: texting, using a cell phone or other wireless

device like a tablet, eating and drinking, grooming, applying makeup, reading, using a navigation system, watching a video and adjusting the radio, CD player or MP3 player.

**Q: Why is TxDOT focusing on distracted driving?**

**A:** Distracted driving is a serious issue and the cause of an increasing number of traffic crashes and fatalities. With April being National Distracted Driving Awareness Month, TxDOT wants to encourage Texans to join the national effort to put away their phones while driving.

- In Texas, nearly 1 in 4 crashes involves driver distraction.
- In 2012, there were 90,378 traffic crashes in Texas that involved distracted (distraction, driver inattention or cell-phone use). These crashes resulted in 18,468 serious injuries and 453 deaths. (TxDOT)

**Q: What is TxDOT doing to educate the public on distracted driving?**

**A:** Safety is TxDOT's No. 1 priority. As such, we have developed the Talk. Text. Crash. campaign to encourage Texans to drive without distractions – no talking or texting. Throughout the month of April (National Distracted Driving Awareness Month) TxDOT will air radio, online video, web banners, mobile banners and cable ads that remind drivers to put away their phones before driving. TxDOT will also hold community events to educate the public.

- This year's campaign will demonstrate to Texans how hard it is to complete tasks –like texting – while walking. The goal is to show that if people cannot text and walk without having an accident, they surely should not text and drive.
- Messages – through ads, posters, etc. – will educate drivers on the dangers of distracted driving.
- Events will be held in the four major media markets with the largest populations and highest incidences of distracted driving crashes and fatalities: Austin, Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston and San Antonio.
- TxDOT is partnering with AT&T's "It Can Wait" campaign for the community events. AT&T is donating gifts for drawings at each event, and they are providing simulators so participants can experience the effects of distracted driving.

**Q: Why do the marketing materials focus mainly on cellphone use and texting?**

**A:** Cellphone use is one of the most commonly recognized distractions. Using a cellphone while driving delays your reaction time as much as having a blood alcohol concentration of .08, the legal limit for drunk driving. Drivers who use a hand-held device are 4 times more likely to get into a crash serious enough to cause injury. Texting drivers are 23 times more likely to get involved in a crash.

**Q: Is it safe to use hands-free devices while driving?**

**A:** Research indicates that whether it's a hands-free or hand-held device, the distraction is significant enough to degrade a driver's performance. The driver is more likely to miss key visual and audio cues needed to avoid a crash. TxDOT encourages drivers to refrain from using both hand-held and hands-free devices, as both slow a driver's reaction time.

**Q: Is talking or texting on a cellphone illegal in Texas?**

**A:** Texas currently does not have a statewide law regarding cellphone use while driving. Two Texas laws addressing distracted driving were signed into law during 2011. One law prohibits teens from using cellular devices, even with hands-free attachments, for talking and texting while driving. The other law prohibits the use of handheld cellular devices in school zones.

**Q: What cities have distracted driving laws in Texas?**

**A:** Amarillo, Austin, Dallas, El Paso, Galveston, Missouri City, Nacogdoches, San Antonio and Stephenville have enacted local distracted driving laws. Although these cities are the only ones that have laws against distracted driving, all Texans should drive without distractions.

**Q: Does TxDOT support the current texting and driving legislation?**

**A:** TxDOT's job is to educate the public on the dangers of distracted driving and convince Texans to put away their phones when driving.

**Q: What can individuals do to reduce distracted driving?**

**A:** Drivers hold the key to driving safely. Through the Talk. Text. Crash. campaign and others, we continue to remind drivers of these simple steps to stay safe on the road:

- **Always buckle up.**
- **Drive a safe speed** (that takes traffic, road conditions and weather into account).
- **Stop at stop signs and red lights.**
- **Pass carefully.**
- **Pay attention** (focus 100 percent on driving, which means no talking or texting on cell phones or engaging in other distracting behaviors).
- **Never drink and drive.**

**Q: Where can I find out more about distracted driving?**

**A:** Visit [www.distraction.gov](http://www.distraction.gov) for more information on distracted driving. Additionally, TxDOT will share important information on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/TxDOT> and YouTube <http://www.youtube.com/user/txdotpio> to educate drivers on the dangers associated with distracted driving.

**Q: What is the cost of the campaign?**

**A:** \$450,000