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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

**For Immediate Release**

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## **AS DISTRACTED DRIVING BECOMES AN INCREASING THREAT ON TEXAS ROADWAYS, TXDOT RAMPS UP PUBLIC EDUCATION**

*Talk. Text. Crash. campaign launches statewide*

AUSTIN — It happens every day. You get a text or a phone call and you feel the need to respond immediately, even when you're driving. But what you may not know is a simple text or call can cost you your life or someone else's.

"Distracted driving is unacceptable, and it's something that is preventable," said John Barton, TxDOT's deputy executive director. "If you reply to or send a text while driving, you are putting your life or someone else's life at risk."

It's a fact – distracted drivers are making Texas roads more dangerous. According to crash data collected by the Texas Department of Transportation, to date, there were 90,378 crashes in Texas in 2012 that involved distracted driving (distraction, driver inattention or cellphone use). That's an 8-percent increase from 2011. Of these crashes, 18,468 resulted in serious injuries and 453 resulted in deaths. From 2011 to 2012, there was a 9-percent increase in traffic fatalities caused by distracted driving on Texas roadways.

According to the Texas A&M Transportation Institute, almost half of all Texas drivers in 2012 admit to regularly or sometimes talking on the cell phone while driving. However, 84.9 percent of Texas drivers think driving while talking on a cell phone is a very serious or somewhat serious threat to their personal safety.

In another just-completed study, TTI researchers found that 10 percent of Texas drivers are using their cell phone at any point in time during the day. The finding represents the first time that actual cell phone use by Texas drivers has been measured (rather than self-reported use), and was based on observations of drivers at 190 intersections in 22 counties across the state.

### ***Talk. Text. Crash. Campaign Launch***

Today, TxDOT is launching its *Talk. Text. Crash.* campaign to coincide with National Distracted Driving Awareness Month. Throughout this month, TxDOT will reach out to Texans through community events, TV public service announcements, and online and outdoor advertising. TxDOT is also partnering with AT&T on this year's distracted driving effort.

"In today's tech-connected age, people are relying on text messages and smartphones to stay in touch, but texting while driving is something that carries profound, very real risks. In the

United States, someone is killed or injured once every five minutes on average in a crash that happens while a driver is texting and driving. It's time we worked together to change behaviors, attitudes, hearts and minds," said Dave Nichols, President, AT&T Texas. "We can each commit not to text and drive. We can lead by example. That's why we're pleased to join the Texas Department of Transportation in its *Text.Talk.Crash.* effort and why we continue to raise awareness through our AT&T's own *It Can Wait* campaign."

As part of the campaign, TxDOT is asking Texans to do their part by making a simple commitment to focus on driving when they get behind the wheel.

Barton notes, "Use of cell phones while driving isn't the only action that can lead to serious injury or death. Other actions, such as reading the newspaper, eating or smoking while driving, are also distractions. Keeping drivers safe is our priority."

Although all the age groups are represented in the total number of traffic crashes caused by distracted driving, of the 90,378 traffic crashes in 2012 in Texas, the top two age groups are:

- o 28,443 ages 16-24.
- o 23,784 over the age of 45.

This year's campaign PSAs will demonstrate to Texans how hard it is to complete any simple task – like walking when distracted. The goal is to show that if people cannot text and walk without having an accident, they surely should not text and drive. Texans can watch campaign videos on [YouTube](#).

Learn more about the *Talk. Text. Crash.* campaign by liking the [TxDOT Facebook](#) page: [www.facebook.com/txdot](http://www.facebook.com/txdot).

For media inquiries, contact TxDOT Media Relations at [MediaRelations@txdot.gov](mailto:MediaRelations@txdot.gov) or (512) 463-8700.

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#### **Texas Department of Transportation**

The Texas Department of Transportation is responsible for maintaining 80,000 miles of road and for supporting aviation, rail, and public transportation across the state. TxDOT and its 11,000 employees are committed to working with others to provide safe and reliable transportation solutions for Texas by maintaining a safe system, addressing congestion, connecting Texas communities, and being a Best in Class state agency. Find out more at [www.txdot.gov](http://www.txdot.gov). Fan us on Facebook, [www.facebook.com/txdot](http://www.facebook.com/txdot); and follow us on Twitter, [www.twitter.com/txdot](http://www.twitter.com/txdot)