

SAFETY ON THE ROAD

Many Support Banning Cell Phone Use By Drivers

(NAPSA)—A growing number of Americans believe that using a cell phone while driving can be a dangerous mix.

A recent survey by Nationwide Insurance revealed that 45 percent of drivers say they have been hit or nearly hit by another driver using a cell phone. The danger is also evident in the number of news stories about a deadly crash caused by someone texting behind the wheel.

The government reported that 515,000 people were injured and 5,870 were killed in 2008 in crashes where at least one form of driver distraction was reported. Driver distraction was involved in 16 percent of all fatal crashes in 2008 and was prevalent among young drivers.

The fact is, Americans are getting fed up with people driving while distracted (DWD). Another survey, also by Nationwide Insurance, found that 80 percent of Americans favor a ban on texting while driving, and more than half say they would support a ban on cell phone use while driving altogether.

“In recent months, the debate about the dangers of DWD has intensified as more and more states consider taking legislative action,” said Bill Windsor, Nationwide’s Safety Officer. “The survey results confirm that there is strong public support for banning texting while driving.”

About two-thirds of respondents to a recent poll said they feel pressure to answer calls when on the road. Instead of waiting for the federal and state governments to make these behaviors illegal, Nationwide is working toward technological solutions that



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address the peer pressure that drivers get from friends and family to stay connected.

These solutions involve software installed on a phone or BlackBerry that recognize when you're driving and block incoming calls and texts, using an autoreply message to let your friends know you're driving. Nationwide even plans to offer insurance discounts to drivers who use these devices once they become available.

“Teens have this two-minute rule: Somebody sends a text message, and if you don't get back within two minutes, the other person feels you're mad at them, or something's wrong,” Windsor said. “We think this technology will fill that gap.”

Fewer distracted-while-driving-related crashes could also result in lower insurance costs for consumers.

“By working closely with legislators, public safety officials and other key stakeholders, we can arrive at real-world solutions to this problem and help make the roads a safer place,” said Windsor.

To learn more, visit the Web site at www.nationwide.com/dwd.