

NEWSWORTHY TRENDS

Most Americans Admit To Driving While Distracted

(NAPSA)—Feel like you're the only one on the road not talking on a cell phone? Odds are, you're probably right.

Nearly three-quarters of Americans admit they drive while distracted by activities such as talking on the phone, texting, or fiddling with an MP3 player, according to a new survey by Nationwide Insurance.

More than 80 percent said they talk on the phone while driving and 40 percent of Americans between the ages of 16 and 30 admitted to writing and sending text messages while driving. Forty percent of drivers have been hit or almost hit by another driver who was using a mobile phone, the survey found.

The study showed that social pressure and technology contributed to the prevalence of driving while distracted, or DWD. Almost two-thirds of drivers said their colleagues, friends and family expect them to be available by cell or other electronic communication devices at all times.

"Current 'rules' making it socially and professionally unacceptable to not respond immediately to a call or e-mail have made DWD commonplace," said Bill Windsor, associate vice president of safety for Nationwide. "Americans need to realize that there is no such thing as safe DWD."

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, there are 115 road fatalities each day in the United States, and distracted driving causes 80 percent of road accidents.

"Clearly, distracted driving has taken over our roadways, and our



More than half of drivers have been hit or nearly hit by someone using his or her cell phone.

survey shows that no one is immune—no matter how safe they think they are," Windsor added. "The bottom line is, if you do it in the kitchen, bathroom or office, you shouldn't be doing it while driving.

"When it comes to preventing distracted driving, laws, company policies and education are important; however, individual Americans—whether we've had our license for four months or four decades—are in the driver's seat when it comes to putting the brakes on DWD," said Windsor.

Safety Tips

- Build time into your trip to stop for food and necessary cell phone use.

- Give yourself time to react to other drivers; keep a two-second cushion between you and the car in front of you—four seconds if the weather is bad.

- Secure cargo that may move around while you are driving. Do not reach down to pick up items that have dropped to the floor.

For more information on DWD and tips on safe driving, please visit www.nationwide.com/dwd.