

ROAD TO SAFETY

Motorists Claim Distractions Affect Their Driving

(NAPSA)—Anyone who is surprised at the number of accidents caused by distracted drivers has not been paying attention.

In a recent survey by Farmers Insurance Group of Companies, more than 80 percent of drivers said they don't drive as well when they are subject to distractions.

Eighty-three percent acknowledged that it's harder to concentrate on driving while engaging in activities such as eating or drinking, talking on their cell phones, adjusting radios or CD players.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), distracted drivers are a factor in 25 to 50 percent of all vehicle crashes—or between 4,000 and 8,000 crashes each day—resulting in an estimated \$40 to \$80 billion in damages annually.

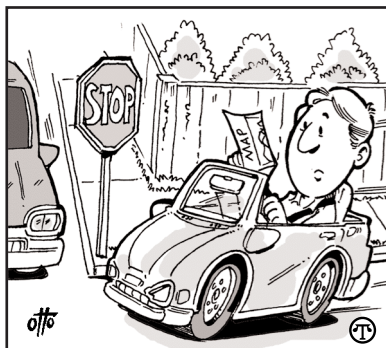
Distracted driving can take many forms: using a cell phone, adjusting the radio, talking to passengers, “rubbernecking,” reading a map, cleaning the windshield, attending to children or pets, eating or drinking, picking things up off the floor and personal grooming are a few examples.

The number of motorists using hand-held cell phones has greatly increased driver distraction.

A study by the New England Journal of Medicine found that talking on a mobile phone while driving quadruples the risk of an accident—a rate similar to that of drunk driving.

More than seven in 10 said motorists who use hand-held cell phones should be subject to a penalty or fine.

In addition, nearly two thirds (63 percent) of those polled favored stricter driving rules for teens,



Review your map directions before you get in the car. Reading the map while driving could cause an accident.

limiting the number of passengers young drivers may carry. The NHTSA found 16-year-old drivers were 50 percent more likely to be killed when there is another passenger in the vehicle.

Farmers Insurance offers the following tips to help prevent drivers from becoming distracted:

- Make adjustments to radios, seats, air conditioning and mirrors before putting the vehicle in gear.

- Review map directions before getting on the road.

- Refrain from reading in the car. Even a glance could cause you to miscalculate the response to the vehicle in front of you.

- Do not reach for items in the back seat or in the glove compartment while driving.

- Avoid talking on a cell phone while driving.

- Personal grooming should be done before getting into the vehicle.

- Do not engage in stressful or emotional conversations while driving. Pull off the road.

For more information on Farmers Insurance, visit www.farmers.com.