

Texting While Driving

Texting while driving is a problem that has been around for many years. It has cost many lives, whether it be the driver or a pedestrian. Just in 2013 alone, 341,000 car crashes happened that involved texting (Schumaker, Erin). Something needs to be done to eliminate such casualties. Although all Maine drivers are prohibited from texting while driving, as well as in many other states, people still continue to do it every single day. This implies that a stronger enforced law needs to be created to stop this from happening. The issue of texting and driving needs to be resolved. It is an unnecessary distraction, it could result in dangerous consequences such as damage to cars or homes, and it could take away innocent lives.

Texting while driving is referred to as an unnecessary distraction for several reasons. It can take your hands off the wheel, eyes off the road, and distract you from driving, all because of a quick look at a text on a cell phone. On average, a driver takes their eyes off the road for five seconds when looking at a text message (Schumaker, Erin). Traveling at fifty-five miles per hour, a five second look at a cell phone is equivalent to driving the length of a football field without looking at the road ("Texting and Driving Statistics"). Looking away from the road for just five seconds can create major damage; emotionally and physically. In addition to this, at any given daylight moment in America, around 660,000 drivers are using cellphones or manipulating electronic devices ("Facts and Statistics"). This number has stayed around the same since 2010 which goes to show that not much has been done to stop this dangerous issue. The amount of drivers taking their eyes off the road to send a single text message is astonishing and could lead to a number of accidents. Drivers should be focusing on the road, not their phone. For example, a man named William Van Camp was texting while driving and hit another driver. Although the driver and passenger survived, Camp was still arrested for distracted driving. As part of his court-ordered community service he had to speak to young people about the dangers

of texting and driving and why it is unnecessary (Chang, David). This is a beneficial way to stop texting while driving because the words are coming directly from a driver who did it. He is giving his own experiences, explaining what went wrong, and pointing out the reasons why texting while driving is unnecessary and dangerous. Hearing these raw facts from someone who experienced texting and driving themselves, will create a greater impact on teens and anyone who texts and drives.

In addition, the dangerous consequences and damages that texting and driving can cause could involve cars, homes, and more. This could then lead to several physical or emotional damages to yourself and others. It could cause cars to swerve off of the road, or get into major accidents in the blink of an eye. If you text while you are driving, you are already twenty-three times more likely to crash (Soltan, Liz). An example of someone who dealt with physical and emotional damage due to texting and driving is a single mom named Alison Holden. On April 27, 2009, she was driving to work and was rear ended at a stoplight by a driver who was sending a text message at the time. She was diagnosed with a traumatic brain injury and suffered from short-term memory loss months after. This also affected her son because she struggled to care for him while recovering. Her son went through emotional damage because of the lack of care he received from his mother after the accident. Alison still feels effects from the crash today ("Facts and Statistics"). This story is a perfect but tragic example of how texting while driving can cause major damage in several aspects of a persons life. Alison's car was damaged, her memory was damaged, and so was her son. Would you pick up your phone for just a few seconds while driving if it meant negatively changing someone's, or your own, life forever?

Although being emotionally or physically damaging is tragic, the most heartbreaking outcome of texting while driving is death. In 2014, 3,179 people were killed in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers ("Facts and Statistics"). Most people believe that picking up

their phone to send a quick text message would not cause any problem, but they soon learn from their mistakes when someone is killed because of it. For example, a young girl named Alex Brown who was 17 at the time, was texting while driving and crashed her truck on her way to school on November 10, 2009. She died in that accident (“Facts and Statistics”). This shows that by looking at a phone for even just a few seconds can cause death. Alex looked at her phone to send a text message on her way to school and it caused her to lose her life. In other situations, a pedestrian could get killed by someone who was texting while driving, a passenger in the car of a person texting and driving could die, or even people in another car could be killed by someone texting while driving. If people followed the laws and refrained from texting while they are on the road, tragedies like this would not occur.

Some people may think that they do not need to abide by the laws because looking at a phone while driving to send a quick text message can not do any damage. In a 2015 survey, one-third of drivers admitted to texting while driving, even though they are aware of its consequences, and three-quarters said that they have seen other people do it (“Facts and Statistics”). Texting while driving can definitely cause damages, which is proven through the stories and statistics previously discussed. I personally have driven with friends who have picked up their phone to text while they were driving. Little do they know, it could end horribly. I try to prevent my friends and peers to avoid doing this because of the awful events that have happened as a result of it. Some people may disagree and say that texting while driving could avoid actually talking on the phone, or be more convenient and fast. You can get your point across quite quickly with another person, and have a conversation without the time investment that talking on the phone would cause. Although this is all true, is it logical to risk your life just because you did not feel like talking on the phone? Couldn't a brief text or phone call wait a few minutes until you are finished driving?

Risking your life to send a text message that you could wait to send is not a good decision. In order to resolve this problem, people need to look at the pros and cons of texting while driving and realize how much the cons outweigh the pros. To stop texting while driving from happening all over the world, new and stronger enforced laws need to be created. There needs to be greater discipline for those caught texting, and more awareness needs to be spread. You can start spreading awareness by talking to your friends and family who may text and drive, or create posters to hang up at your school so people will understand the reality of it all. Another great way to prevent texting while driving is to find someone from your area who has been involved with it, whether they did it themselves, or were a victim of it, and have them come to your school or workplace to speak about its consequences. Hearing information coming from a person who actually experienced it will have a much stronger and direct effect on people, especially teens. Texting while driving is an unnecessary distraction, could result in dangerous consequences such as damage to cars or homes, and it could take away innocent lives. One text could end someone else's life, or your own. Think before you perform dangerous actions, and help bring awareness to this issue to stop these devastating outcomes.

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