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### **The Dangers of Distracted Driving**

Ever since the first mobile phones started becoming a popular demand, us Americans have been hooked on to them. Whether it's getting a simple text from a friend, or even a facebook notification. When we get that notification, our eyes are wanting us to just look over at it so we can see what it says, and in some cases, to open it up. "Texting while driving is approximately 6 times more lethal than driving drunk"(Texting and Driving Accident Statistics). Texting while driving is certainly an unneeded distraction, it can take away innocent lives, and ever-lasting consequences.

Nowadays, teens are almost addicted to their phones. It's a way to connect to our friends instantly, in the matter of seconds. It's one of the greatest inventions of all time arguably. But it's also accidentally one of the worst causes of car crashes in the U.S.. In Maine, we have laws in place that states drivers cannot be using their phones while driving. Phone-related crashes are obviously still a problem in Maine, and in the U.S. as a whole. Would it help if every driver had to turn off their phone before operating a vehicle? That seems like a very smart and needed enforcer for drivers, but there would be no way of detecting if drivers are actually doing that, unless we had checkpoints for cops to check them. But that would not work because of the amount of money and time that would have to be spent to just check if people actually have turned off their phone. I believe that drivers should follow this idea of shutting off their phones because whoever is texting them or snapchatting them, can most definitely wait for them to *Arrive Alive.*

Secondly, these distracted car accidents are sometimes producing deaths of many innocent americans. Sadly, "11 teens die every day as a result of texting while driving"(Texting and

Driving Accident Statistics). That stat is just eye opening. If you do that math, there is 365 days in a year.  $365 \times 11 = 4,015$  phone related deaths of teens per year. I am a teen myself. Knowing everyday that I have friends who drive and use their phone at the same time, scares me. I worry that they could be part of the 4,015 teen deaths that average in one year. To me, I just don't think that I need to respond to a text immediately to satisfy the other person. Before driving, text the person that you are about to drive so they know that you do not want to be distracted while on the road. I'm positive that the other person will be more satisfied hearing that you made it safely to your destination, then possibly dying from sending a quick text message. To add-on to this phenom, 1 in every 4 motor vehicle accidents are caused by being distracted by a phone(Schumaker, Erin). Within that 25%, there is a significant chance that the accident will be fatal. I believe that if someone really can't live without their phone in their hand at all times, then don't drive. It's as simple as that. You don't need to go out of your way to look at your phone and possibly kill an innocent driver or pedestrian. Just imagine yourself driving one day. And you look at your phone and reply to a quick text. BAM! Next thing you know you're in the hospital with some minor injuries. But the person you had crashed into has died. Would you want that guilt of killing an innocent person, who has a great family who loves them, all for a single text asking "What's up?"? I sure couldn't live with myself knowing that their family is heavily devastated. Now let's turn the tables around for a second. You die because someone was on their phone not paying any attention to the road. Your family is now devastated, and your life has been taken away, all for wanting to send a text back that could've been waited on.

Lastly, distracted driving can very well possibly muster ever-lasting consequences. Some car accidents involve at least 1 death, or even no one dies and just have some minor injuries. But there are some cases where people are crippled with a long-term injury like paralysis or even

brain trauma. In one case, a woman named Erin (Last name not given out), was hit by a car while walking on the crosswalk. This accident was most likely caused by distracted driving. This accident occurred in January of 2016, and she was in the hospital for some time. She has been through many therapeutic sessions for her speech, memory, and even chiropractic therapy. She was once a normal everyday person, who works and pays bills. But now, she lives on a day to day struggle with engaging in conversations with people, and recalling some events, like her own accident (Hope After Head Injury). Erin was just going on with her everyday life when this tragic accident occurred. According to a few recent studies, "Answering a text takes away your attention for about five seconds. Traveling at 55 mph, that's enough time to travel the length of a football field" (Texting and Driving Accident Statistics). This may have very well happened to Erin on that day. This person had to cross an intersection to even get near Erin who was almost out of the crosswalk. If the driver was not distracted, they would've had plenty of time to recognize a pedestrian walking along the crosswalk. All this can be prevented if phones were just put away, out of sight so that drivers aren't going to have the urge to interact with them. You have to look at Erin's story as if it happened to you. Would you want to have permanent damage done to your brain, and in this case, altering your whole life at the point where you are unable to work at a part time job?

To conclude, distracted driving by cell phones is only going to get worse with all the new technology being created every year. Only you can be responsible in preventing such life-altering accidents from happening to you, a pedestrian, or another fellow driver. Driving is a big responsibility to have. You have to know how distracted driving can seriously affect someone's life in a negative way. If you know someone who uses their phone while driving, have them read about survivor stories so that they can understand how being distracted can totally flip someone's

life around, in the matter of seconds. Now, before you go out and drive, remember that you are playing defense and offense at the same time, meaning that you need to lookout for other fellow drivers on their phones, so that you don't become a victim of distracted driving. Drive safe, and just remember, that the text can wait, the snapchat can wait, and the phone call can wait. All that matters is that you reach your destination and *Arrive Alive*.

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