Learning the Dangers of Texting and Driving

Even though it’s common to see people text and drive, it’s very dangerous to you, your friends, family and others around you. In this handout, you’ll learn tips that can help keep you and others safe on the road. You’ll also learn what happens if you get caught texting and driving.

WHY IS TEXTING AND DRIVING SO BAD?

Texting and driving is a type of distracted driving that takes your attention off the road. It puts you, your passengers and other drivers in serious danger. It is also illegal (against the law) in Massachusetts.

There are 3 types of distracted driving, which are:
• When your eyes are off the road
• When your hand are off the steering wheel
• When your mind is thinking of something other than driving

Texting and driving combines all 3 types of distracted driving. When you text and drive, your eyes are on your phone, your hands are off the wheel and your mind is focusing on your phone.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I GET CAUGHT TEXTING AND DRIVING?

Texting and driving is illegal in Massachusetts, even if your car isn’t moving. Here is what happens if you get caught:
• First time - $100 fine
• Second time - $250 fine
• Third time and any time after - $500 fine

You will receive other penalties (punishments) if you damage your car or another person’s car. You will also receive penalties if you hurt yourself or another person.

HOW CAN I REDUCE OR STOP HOW OFTEN I TEXT AND DRIVE?

If you do text and drive, here are some helpful tips to help you reduce (cut down) and eventually stop how often you text and drive:

• Remember that you have a choice when it comes to texting and driving. You have the power to choose safe, undistracted driving instead of unsafe, distracted driving. You are responsible for the choices you make. You are also responsible for whatever happens to you or others if you choose to text and drive.

• Before you get in your car, tell your friends and family that you won’t be answering your phone. Tell your friends and family about how long you expect to be in the car.

• Put your phone on silent before you get in the car. This can help reduce (lower) the temptation to look at your phone and answer texts.

• When you get in the car, put your phone where you can’t reach it. This can make it easier to focus on the road.

Remember, texting and driving is just 1 type of distracted driving. It also includes playing games, checking or sending emails, taking or sending photos or using social media.

A note for your parents...

One of the best ways to reduce the chances of your teen texting and driving is to set a good example yourself. When you drive, put your phone on silent or out of reach until you arrive wherever you’re going.

You should also talk to your teen about driving safely and responsibly. Set clear consequences (punishments) if your teen does text and drive.