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The Perils of Distracted Driving

We've all heard about it, and we "know how bad it is". It's one of those things like smoking and habitually eating fast food - we know the long-term harm but unless it is put into perspective or something bad happens to us, we can usually look the other way.

Over the past years, laws, rules and regulations have been enacted in order to keep our roads safe by instilling discipline to motorists to prevent the occurrence of unnecessary injuries and lost of innocent lives. However, no matter how strict the penalties that are imposed, statistics reveal that casualties and serious injuries due to accidents are still rampant and prevalent. The culprit- distracted driving.

Distracted driving is driving while engaged in other activities, including: using a cell phone, texting, eating, or reading. These activities take the driver's attention away from the road. There are three types of distractions that may occur while driving: visual, manual, and cognitive. All compromise the safety of the driver, passengers, bystanders, and other individuals on the road.

Visual distraction is taking one's eyes off the road; manual distraction is taking one's hands off the wheel, and cognitive distraction occurs when an individual takes their mind off the basic task of driving. Text messaging requires visual, manual, and cognitive attention of the driver, thus making it a particularly alarming distraction.

The overwhelming cause of road crashes can be attributed to drivers and vehicle defects account for only a fraction of recorded incidents. These human causes invariably involve lack of discipline and recklessness. Road user behavior is the single most important contributory factor of road accidents. Drivers commit [violations of traffic laws](#), including those of distracted driving when they see others doing the same violations and when traffic enforces are not present. If this behavior of drivers can be modified then road accidents can be squarely addressed. ROAD SAFETY IS THEREFORE A MATTER OF PERSONAL DISCIPLINE MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE.

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