

Be a Decide to Drive Detective



Distracted driving is a serious problem. In fact, in 2009, 20 percent of crashes where someone got injured, involved distracted driving.

Do the drivers in your family focus their complete attention on driving? And what about all those other drivers out there on the road? It's time to put on your detective hat and do some investigating to find out! Share the safety checklist on the left with the drivers in your home.

Wreck-less Checklist

1. Consciously make a decision each and every time you get behind the wheel to make all other activities, passengers, and priorities secondary to driving.
2. Before you put your car in gear:
 - Fasten your safety belt.
 - Adjust seats, headrests, vehicle controls, and mirrors.
 - Put on any accessories you may need, such as sunglasses.
 - Put away all reading material.
 - Pre-load CDs or mp3 playlists, and adjust the volume level so your music does not mask the sounds of emergency sirens.
 - Enter an address in the navigation system before you depart, or review maps and written directions before you drive.
3. Stop your vehicle in a safe area any time there is a distraction that needs your attention, such as retrieving items, having an involved discussion, reading, smoking, or disciplining a child.
4. Do not eat or drink while driving.
5. Keep your eyes on the road and your hands on the steering wheel.
6. Do not apply makeup, groom, polish your nails, or change clothing while driving.



Part A. Safe driving habits begin at home, so that's where you'll start your investigation. Interview your parents and the other drivers in your home. We've listed a few questions to get you started, but be sure to add your own questions, too. You can use the back of this paper to record the responses.

1. I text while driving: Often Sometimes Never
2. I don't use a hands-free device when talking on the phone while driving: Often Sometimes Never
3. I eat snacks while driving: Often Sometimes Never
4. I _____: Often Sometimes Never
5. I _____: Often Sometimes Never
6. I _____: Often Sometimes Never

Part B. Now it's time to take your sleuthing on the road. As you ride in the car, observe what the drivers around you are doing. Write an X in the magnifying glasses next to each behavior each time you observe it.

Talking on a cell phone without using a hands-free device	
Eating or drinking while driving	
Applying makeup, combing hair, or doing other grooming activities while driving	
Adjusting seats, headrests, mirrors, etc. while driving	
Hunting for another CD	
Adjusting GPS controls while driving	
Reading while driving	
Playing loud music while driving	
Looking at a passenger instead of the road while driving	
Reaching into the back seat while driving	
Passengers distracting the driver	
Write other behaviors you see:	

Be sure to share your findings with your family members. They may be surprised at just how many distracted driving behaviors you discovered!



Activity Two

Spread the Word for Decide to Drive

Part A. All across the country, **Decide to Drive** detectives, just like you, have been on the lookout for distracted driving behaviors. Here are some reports on what they have observed.

At the airport, the driver in front of me was on a hand-held cell phone, with what appeared to be a sandwich in the other hand. The driver never looked around and started pulling out as a merging vehicle was approaching the same lane. Had I not been alert, as he slammed on the brakes, I could have very easily hit him—creating a domino effect.

I was walking to the preschool with my 2 toddlers. We waited for the 4-way walk signal to cross the intersection. When we were half way through, a woman talking on a cell phone turned left, running a red light and heading right for us. She almost ran over my son!

Traffic was bumper to bumper during rush hour. A female in her early 20s was reading a book propped on her steering wheel while creeping along in traffic. I observed her moving forward on several occasions, only rarely looking up at traffic.

Sound familiar? You can read more firsthand reports at the **Decide to Drive** website, www.decidetodrive.org. Then look through your notes for Activity 1, and write a report about something you saw during your on-road sleuthing. Or, submit a story of your own! Use the back of the sheet to get started.

Part B. Distracted driving is such a serious problem that the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, the professional organization for the doctors who put bones back together after a car crash, and the Auto Alliance, which is made up of 12 automakers, have launched the **Decide to Drive Poster Contest**. It asks students in grades 5-8 to help spread the word about the dangers of distracted driving. Use the back of this sheet to create a rough sketch for your 11" x 17" poster. Then ask your teacher for details about entering the contest. Here are some facts to help you brainstorm ideas for your poster:

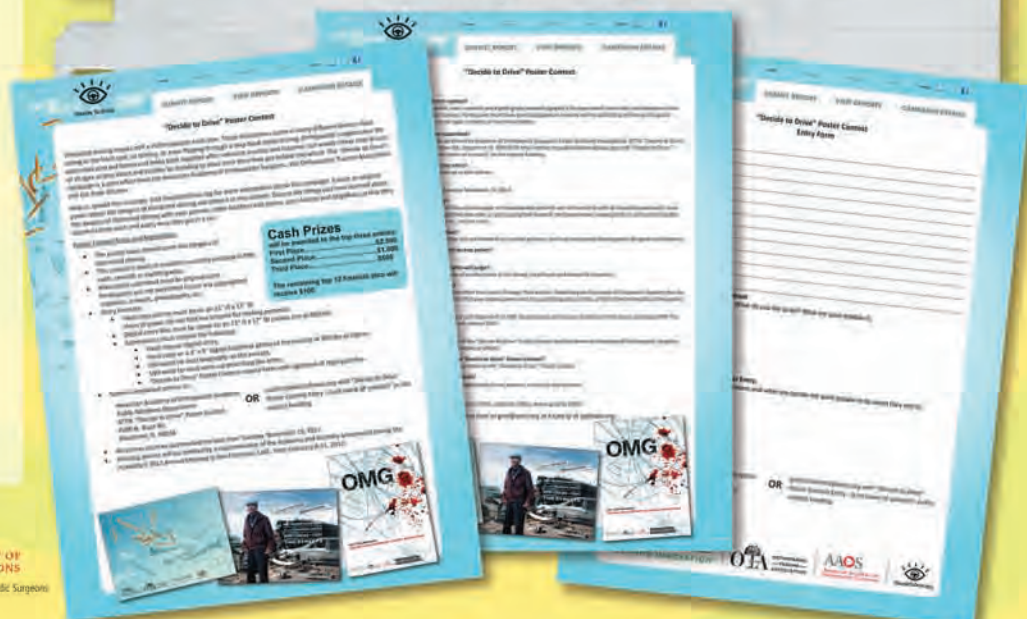
- According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), in 2009 there were 5,474 fatalities and an estimated 448,000 people injured in motor vehicle crashes that were reported to have involved distracted driving.
- A vehicle traveling 65 MPH goes the length of a 747 airplane in less than 2.5 seconds. So imagine how hard it would be to avoid hitting something or someone if the driver were distracted!
- Drivers who text have a 23 times greater risk of being involved in a crash than they do when they are just driving.
- Twenty percent of crashes where someone got injured involved distracted driving.
- Of those people killed in crashes related to distracted driving, 18 percent involved being distracted by a cell phone.

Use these questions to start planning your poster design:
Who is the target audience for my poster (other kids, teens, parents, other adults)?

What message will I have on my poster?

What kinds of images will I include? What colors will I use?

Go to decidetodrive.org to find out more about entering the poster contest.



Activity Three

Decide to Drive Detectives Have Power!

Many communities have rules that prohibit distracted driving behaviors. They include restricting the number of passengers that teen drivers can have in the car, prohibiting texting while driving, and requiring that drivers use a hands-free device to talk on the phone.



Part B. Now it's time to use what you have learned to take action! Review your notes from the surveillance you conducted in Activity 1. Then, compose a letter to a community leader—the mayor or county executive, for example—that talks about the problem of distracted driving in your community. Explain what you saw during your surveillance, why you think distracted driving is a serious problem in your community, and what steps you think should be taken to address it. Use the space below to outline your thoughts before you compose your letter.

Part A. What are the rules in your community? Ask your parents to help you investigate. Your assignment is to work together to find out if your community has rules that address distracted driving and, if so, what those rules are. Start by checking your community website to find out whom you might contact to ask about distracted driving regulations. It might be someone in your local police department, the city manager, or your community's public information officer, for example. You can send an email, write a letter, or make an appointment to ask your questions in person. (Be sure to explain that you are working on an assignment for school.)

The person I contacted:

Name: _____

Title: _____

In the space below, list the rules about distracted driving that exist in your community. (If there aren't any rules, just write "none.")

Cell Phone Rules: _____

Other Rules: _____





Take the Decide to Drive Pledge

It's not enough to learn about distracted driving behaviors and tell others why distracted driving is such a serious issue. The most important thing you can do is to eliminate distracted driving in your own family. Cut out the pledge certificate below, review it with your family members, and have everyone sign the **Decide to Drive Pledge**. Then place your pledge certificate in the glove compartment of the family car.

DECIDE TO DRIVE PLEDGE

Distracted driving is a problem that impacts people who aren't even driving. That's why the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons—the medical doctors who put bones and limbs back together after road crashes—has joined with the Auto Alliance which is made up of 12 automakers, to launch a national **Decide to Drive** campaign to help put an end to distracted driving.

Distracted driving includes activities such as texting, talking on a cell phone without using a hands-free device, eating or drinking, reading, applying makeup or doing other personal grooming activities, and taking one's eyes off the road.

Our family understands the risks associated with distracted driving behaviors. By signing this pledge, we promise to **Decide to Drive** each time we get in a car. And we promise to warn the family driver anytime he or she is engaging in distracted driving behaviors.

Date _____



AUTO ALLIANCE
DRIVING INNOVATION



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