

# 10 Tips for Managing Driver Distractions

Distracted drivers pose a deadly risk to everyone on the road. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates that in 2008, the most recent year for which data is available, **5,870 people lost their lives** and another **515,000 were injured** in police-reported crashes in which one form of distraction was noted on the crash report.<sup>1</sup> Drivers engage in a range of distracting activities.

**Here are 10 tips for managing some of the most common distractions.**

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- 1 Turn it off.** Turn your phone off or switch to silent mode before you get in the car.
  - 2 Spread the word.** Set up a special message to tell callers that you are driving and you'll get back to them as soon as possible, or sign up for a service that offers this.
  - 3 Pull over.** If you need to make a call, pull over to a safe area first.
  - 4 Use your passengers.** Ask a passenger to make the call for you.
  - 5 X the Text.** Don't ever text and drive, surf the web or read your email while driving. It is dangerous and against the law in most states.
  - 6 Know the law.** Familiarize yourself with state and local laws before you get in the car. Some states and localities prohibit the use of hand held cell phones. GHSA offers a handy chart of state laws on its website:  
[www.ghsa.org/html/stateinfo/laws/cellphone\\_laws.html](http://www.ghsa.org/html/stateinfo/laws/cellphone_laws.html).
  - 7 Prepare.** Review maps and directions before you start to drive. If you need help when you are on the road, ask a passenger to help or pull over to a safe location to review the map/directions again.
  - 8 Secure your pets.** Pets can be a big distraction in the car. Always secure your pets properly before you start to drive.
  - 9 Keep the kids safe.** Pull over to a safe location to address situations with your children in the car.
  - 10 Focus on the task at hand.** Refrain from smoking, eating, drinking, reading and any other activity that takes your mind and eyes off the road.
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<sup>1</sup> Traffic Safety Facts. An Examination of Driver Distraction as Recorded in NHTSA Databases, September 2008. Source: Governors Highway Safety Association, [www.ghsa.org](http://www.ghsa.org).