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Distracted Driving – Adds 800% to Collision Risk

The risk of a collision goes up 400% when talking on the phone and 800% when texting, experts tell us.

Teen drivers most at risk!

New Orleans, LA – Sept. 1, 2011 – The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports nearly 6,000 people died and a half-million others were injured in car crashes involving a distracted driver in 2008 - the highest percentage of whom were teen drivers.

As new drivers, teens are more susceptible to crashes than the rest of the driving population. Inexperience and immaturity combined with an ever-growing menu of distractions can cause them to lose focus on the road and their surroundings. Teens are simply tethered to their cell phones and texting and have a difficult time putting it aside to focus on the important task of driving.

The enhanced technology and functionality of today's cell phones is a major cause. Twenty-six percent of teens admit they've at least sometimes used their cell phone to take pictures or videos while driving, 18 percent say they have gone online, and 15 percent say they've updated their Facebook or MySpace status through their phones while behind the wheel.*

It's not just teens who are involved in this extremely dangerous behavior. The Liberty Mutual Research Institute for Safety has found that drivers are not well-calibrated to the distracting effects of a hand-held or hands-free cell phone conversation. Most of us have no idea how distracted we really are when we use these devices. A 2009 Virginia Tech study concluded that texting while driving takes a driver's focus away from the road for an average of 4.6 seconds - enough time to travel the length of a football field at 55 mph.

The way to prevent these crashes, whether from texting while driving or other distractions, is very simple:

- Don't do it and stay focused on your driving
- Never text or send emails while you drive
- Avoid talking on the phone when driving - especially if it's a complex or emotional conversation

It's easier said than done for many teens to put down the "distractions" and focus on the road. However there are remedies that parents can take to minimize or eliminate distractions caused by cell phones. For instance, several cost-effective products on the market that eliminate cell phone distractions are worth a look. One product in particular that we've tested seems to work well, is easy to install and doesn't require/use GPS. It's called **Key2SafeDriving**. Very simply it is a device (Activator) that plugs into the OBDII port of the vehicle (under the dash) that "pairs" with the cell phone using blue tooth. When the vehicle is started, the device and cell phone "pair" and if a phone call comes in, it goes directly to voice mail. If a text comes in, the software automatically sends a text back to the sender, indicating that the person is driving and the driver isn't distracted. Only outbound calls to 911 or to 2 pre-programmed phone numbers, such as mom and dad, can be made and no outbound texting is allowed.

While there's no guarantee that these types of distracted driving tools will eliminate driver distractions, we believe a device like this establishes "discipline" and can help keep the teen's eyes and focus on the road.

While we typically don't market other companies products, we do offer the Key2SafeDriving device at our cost to VIP Members when purchasing a 3 year VIP Discount Card and *Electronic Glove Box*® membership. To learn more go to www.myezcarcare.com and click on **Teen Driver Safety Suite** on the right side menu or call us at 504-273-0337.

** A special thanks to Liberty Mutual and Liberty Mutual/SADD Teen Driving Survey, 2009*