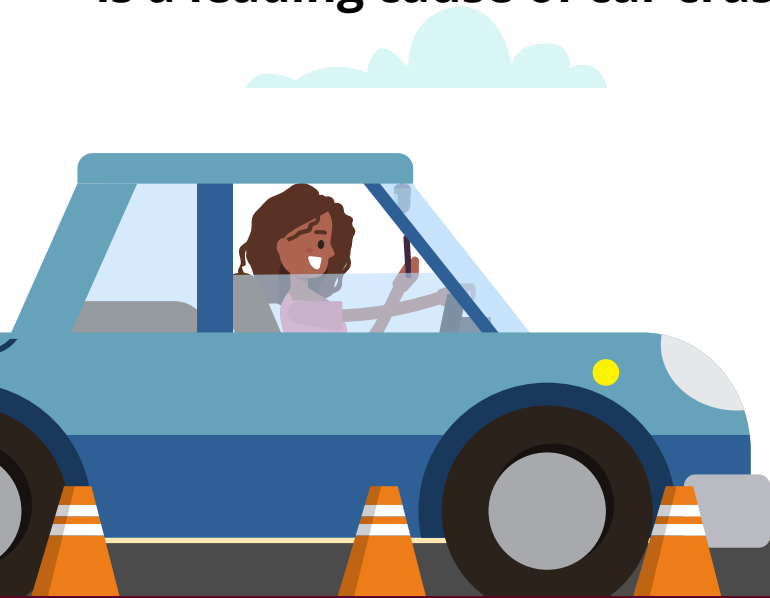# What You Should Know About Distracted Driving

Distracted driving, also called driver inattention, is a leading cause of car crashes.

The majority of drivers who were distracted at the time of a crash were teens.[i]

Distracting tasks—such as texting or dialing—take the driver's eyes off the forward roadway, making it harder for him or her to react to unexpected hazards.

It is more dangerous for new teenage drivers to engage in distracting tasks while driving than it is for experienced adult drivers.[ii]

Tasks that take the driver's eyes off the forward roadway, including reaching for things, increase crash risk![iii]

Sending or checking texts

Using a phone to make a call, check social media, take pictures, or play music

Looking at a map or GPS app

Eating or drinking

Talking to passengers, especially other teens

Adjusting seats, windows, mirrors, or a radio

How to Keep You and Your Teen Safe

- Supervise your newly licensed teen more closely than you think you need to. Ride with him or her when you can.

- Do not use your cell phone while driving. If you or your teen need to take a call, pull over to the side of the road.

- Limit your teen's nighttime driving and driving with passengers, especially during his or her first 6 months of driving.

- You and your teen can agree, in writing, to a series of monthly "checkpoints," easing restrictions as your teen's judgment and experience improve.[iv]

- Model good behavior for your teen when you are behind the wheel.

NICHD is committed to understanding driving risks and studying ways to help keep teen drivers safe.

Learn more about ways to reduce accidents from distracted driving at *http://www.distraction.gov* and *https://www.nichd.nih.gov/DrivingRisk*.

[i] National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (2019). Distracted Driving in Fatal Crashes, 2017.

[ii] Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. (2019). Teenagers.

[iii] *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2019). Release: Reaching for objects while driving may raise teen crash risk nearly sevenfold.

[iv] University of Michigan Injury Prevention Center. (2019). Motor Vehicle Crash Prevention Resources.

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Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development