

Drivers should consider consequences before texting and driving, getting behind the wheel

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"I'm a good multi-tasker, so nothing will happen if I text and drive."

In a survey with AAA Insurance and *Seventeen Magazine*, 34% of teens who drive distracted said they're used to multi-tasking and find it easy to do.

"I'm not actually texting, I'm just reading the message my friend sent me."

When reading a text message, your eyes are off the road for an average of 4.6 seconds, according to the Ad Council. It might not sound like much, but if you were driving 55 mph, it would be enough time to drive the length of a football field.

"If I just send this one text while I'm at a stoplight, it's no big deal."

Many teens think it's safer to text at a stoplight, but thousands of accidents occur at intersections every year. This could be because 73% of teens glance at their phones and 60% send texts at red lights, according to an AT&T teen driving survey.

No matter what the excuse, texting and driving is dangerous and has not been taken as seriously as it should. Lately, it has become a huge issue among both teenagers and adults.

Look at your phone. Is the last text you sent or received worth getting into an accident for while driving?

Drivers are putting their lives at risk just to send a text as simple as "What's up?"

According to the Ad Council, 85% of people who text and drive agree that it is a problem, and 89% recognize it reduces reaction time.

My question is, if they know it's a dangerous habit, why do they still do it? Many drivers overestimate their driving skills and believe an accident could never happen to them. In fact, a Harris Poll said that 57% of people rate themselves as better than the average driver.

Not only is texting and driving dangerous, it's also illegal in most states.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2012, a Kansas law banned texting while driving and began charging a \$60 fine. Drivers can't "write, send or read a written communication," so even glancing at your phone when you get a new text, changing the song on your iPod or talking to Siri is distracting.

Is sending one text worth \$60 and possibly the cost of car damages or even your life?

In a world with never-ending communication through technology, I know how tempting it can be to check your phone as soon as it rings, even if you're in the car.

However, driving is already crazy enough — paying attention to the road, going the speed limit, checking your mirrors, looking at signs, etc. — so adding a phone into the mix isn't a very safe combination.

The best ways to avoid this temptation are to put your phone away, turn off the ringer or have another passenger text for you.

No matter what you do, next time you're behind the wheel, please just put the phone down and drive.