



# Quick Notes

from the Idaho Office of Highway Safety

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Idaho Transportation Department - PO Box 7129 – Boise, ID 83707-1129  
P: (208) 334-8100 F: (208) 334-4430 -- www.itd.idaho.gov/ohs

## **General Message from the Highway Safety Manager**

Hi Highway Safety Partners,

Earlier this week, Brent Jennings and I got to travel to Rhode Island for their “Safety 2010 Conference” where we presented how we are blending engineering and behavior in our efforts to reduce traffic deaths and serious injuries here in Idaho. Our presentation was built on the implementation of Idaho’s Strategic Highway Safety Plan. It was a great experience and it is interesting how different states are good at different things. It was wonderful to share the successes that we have accomplished in our teams. Thank you for the good work you are doing!

The new fiscal year is on the horizon. On September 30<sup>th</sup>, we are wrapping up Federal Fiscal Year 2010, and we’re marching forward to the new fiscal year. This month, we have received the last SAFETEA-LU Incentive grant funding for Section 410 (Impaired driving), Section 408 (Records Data Management Program), and Section 2010 (Motorcycle Safety) funding. We are very pleased to qualify for these incentive funds that help us with our task of reducing traffic deaths, serious injuries, and economic losses.

I will now be off to Kansas City Missouri for the Annual Meeting of the Governor’s Highway Safety Association. I will be leading a workshop on culture change. I think this will be a great topic thanks to my talented presenters. Then it will be time to stay home for awhile!

Take care and keep up every effort to encourage everyone (through education and enforcement) to make smart driving choices, provide well-engineered roads so that people that do make mistakes don’t pay the ultimate price, and lastly, provide emergency response to help the injured to a speedy recovery. Have a great weekend.

Mary

## **Nearly Nine in Ten Motorists Fearful of Texting Drivers**

Below is a recent press release from AAA Idaho regarding distracted driving. I want to share it in its entirety.

***Dave Carlson***  
*Director of Public & Government Affairs*

Sept. 21, 2010  
**For Immediate Release**

*Survey shows a serious disconnect between public perceptions and behaviors*

Despite major declines in the number of Americans killed on U.S. highways, more than half of drivers say they feel less safe on the roads they drive than they did five years ago, according to a new AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety study.

The leading reason for the fear cited by American drivers is distracted driving, with 88 percent of motorists rating drivers who text and email as a very serious threat to their safety. That's almost identical to the percent that rated people that drive after drinking alcohol as a very serious threat (87%).

According to the third-annual 2010 Traffic Safety Culture Index, released Monday by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, half of survey respondents report having been involved in a serious crash, having had a friend or relative injured or killed in a crash, or both.

The report showed that even with the 8.9 percent decline in fatalities from 2008 to 2009, the nation still experienced 33,963 fatalities last year, enough to account for 93 fatalities each day.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates that 16 percent of crashes and fatalities involve distracted driving. Estimates of the number of crashes, injuries and deaths caused by distracted driving vary due to limitations of existing motor vehicle crash data.

"As mobile technology evolves at a breakneck pace, more and more people rightly fear and recognize that distracted driving – texting, e-mails, phone calls and more – is a growing threat on the road. But, unfortunately, this new data confirms the 'Do as I say, not as I do' attitude is prevalent throughout the driving public," said AAA Foundation President and CEO Peter Kissinger.

The study showed that the majority of drivers (62 percent) feel that talking on a cell phone is a very serious threat to safety, but they do not always behave accordingly or believe that others share these views. In fact, nearly 70 percent of those surveyed admitted to talking on their cell phones and 24 percent said they read or sent text messages or emails while driving in the previous month.

"This year's Traffic Safety Culture Index helps identify crucial disconnects between public perceptions and behaviors, an important step in helping the public understand the true risks of their actions," Kissinger said.

In Idaho, AAA said improved education, enforcement, and crash data collection are necessary to address the distracted driving problem. The Foundation survey indicates motorists expect more. For instance, nine out of ten respondents personally consider texting or emailing while driving unacceptable and 80 percent would support a law banning it.

"Idaho lawmakers must tackle this issue with a law that squarely concentrates on the scope and impact of this behavior," said AAA Idaho Director of Public and Government Affairs Dave Carlson.

"Thirty states have passed laws banning texting while driving, but we cannot afford to be complacent or draft a law that is so weak as to lack a deterrent effect."

As part of AAA's commitment to improving highway safety for its members and for all road users, the auto club launched a legislative campaign in 2009 to ban texting while driving in all 50 states. "The campaign has helped 11 more states to enact laws against this risky driving behavior this year, bringing the total to 30 states and the District of Columbia," Carlson said.

During Heads Up Driving Week (September 26 - October 2, 2010), AAA hopes to exert influence by drawing attention to the size of this problem and encouraging states to build a social climate in which traffic safety is highly valued and vigorously pursued.

AAA supports a comprehensive approach to addressing distracted driving and believes any legislative or administrative proposal to address distracted driving should be based on sound research and/or fundamental safety principals and include a significant education component.

Here is a link that includes a fact sheet: [http://www.aaaorid.com/news/view\\_release.asp?id=489](http://www.aaaorid.com/news/view_release.asp?id=489)

### **NHTSA/ NCSA Newly Released Research Note "Distracted Driving 2009"**

Today NHTSA released the updated Research Note "Distracted Driving 2009" (DOT-HS-811-379). In 2009, 5,474 people were killed on U.S. roadways and an estimated additional 448,000 were injured in motor vehicle crashes that were reported to have involved distracted driving. Distraction-related fatalities represented 16 percent of overall traffic fatalities in 2009, the same percentage as in 2008. To view and download the entire Research Note, please click the link: <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811379.pdf>

### **August Preliminary Fatality Report**

Below is the latest count of people killed on Idaho’s roads so far this year. As always, this is preliminary information and subject to change. The summer count is consistent with past years but we still have a lower total as compared to last year and the last 3-year average. Let’s keep working hard by always setting a good example and reminding our family and friends to make smart driving choices.

#### **ITD Office of Highway Safety Fatalities By the Month\* - August 2010**

		MONTH	TOTALS			CUMULATIVE TOTALS		
2007	2008		3-Yr Average (07,08,09)	2009	2010	3-Yr Cum. Average (07,08,09)	2009	2010
25	19	JANUARY	18	11	8	18	11	8
12	8	FEBRUARY	12	17	7	31	28	15
16	18	MARCH	17	17	15	48	45	30
18	16	APRIL	17	17	11	65	62	41
23	30	MAY	24	18	16	88	80	57
16	23	JUNE	17	12	18	105	92	75
31	18	JULY	25	26	26	130	118	101
29	21	AUGUST	26	29	28	157	147	129
28	22	SEPTEMBER	26	29		183	176	
13	21	OCTOBER	17	17		200	193	
20	19	NOVEMBER	19	19		219	212	
21	17	DECEMBER	17	14		237	226	129
252	232	YEAR TO DATE	237	226	129			

\*Data limitations: This report is based on information provided by law enforcement agencies on crashes resulting in a death that occurs within 30 days of the crash. Totals of this report are the number of persons killed. Averages are rounded. **Data is preliminary and is subject to change.**

## **NHTSA/NCSA Newly Released Publications**

Here's some new information that you may find of interest.

1. Research Note "***Driver Electronic Device Use Observation Protocol***" (DOT-HS-811-361). Distracted driving as a traffic safety issue has received increased attention in recent months. In particular, cellular phone use has come under increased scrutiny. NHTSA's primary method for estimating cell phone use is the National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS). This Research Note provides information about NOPUS and how it observes and reports on driver cell phone use. To read the entire Research Note, click the link: <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811361.pdf>
2. Research Note "***Driver Electronic Device Use in 2009***" (DOT-HS-811-372). The percentage of drivers visibly manipulating hand-held devices while driving dropped significantly from 1.0 percent in 2008 to 0.6 percent in 2009. These results are from the National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS), which provides the only nationwide probability-based observed data on driver electronic device use in the United States. To read the entire Research Note, click the link: <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811372.pdf>
3. NHTSA Report "***Crash Factors in Intersection-Related Crashes: An On-Scene Perspective***" (DOT-HS-811-366). In order to understand the crash scenarios at intersections, this report examines general characteristics of motor vehicle traffic crashes at intersections by analyzing the association of the critical reason with several crash factors such as driver's sex and age, traffic control device, critical pre-crash event, and atmospheric conditions. To read the entire NHTSA Report, click the link: <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811366.pdf>
4. NHTSA Report "***Distracted driving and Driver, Roadway, and Environmental Factors***" (DOT-HS-811-380). NHTSA conducted the National Motor Vehicle Crash Causation Survey (NMVCCS) to collect on-scene information on several crash factors, including the ones related to driver inattention. The NMVCCS data was used in this report to look at two facets of distracted driving, namely distraction from sources within the vehicle and non-driving cognitive activities, as associated factors. To read the entire NHTSA Report, click the link: <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811380.pdf>
5. Research Note "***High Visibility Enforcement Demonstration Programs in Connecticut and New York Reduce Hand-Held Phone Use***" (DOT-HS-811-376). This research note provides interim results from a high-visibility enforcement demonstration program being conducted in Syracuse, NY and Hartford, Connecticut. Both test communities have launched a year long program to conduct waves of high visibility enforcement with extensive media about the enforcement activities. Results from the first two waves found hand-held cell phone use dropping 56% in Hartford and 38% in Syracuse. To read the entire Research Note, click the link: <http://www.distraction.gov/files/for-media/2010.09.17-7268-TSF-RN-HighEnforcementCT-NY.pdf>