

# Distracted Driving is Dangerous: Put it Down and *Drive!*

Village Police to Focus on Enforcing Laws Against Distracted Driving

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## What is distracted driving?

Anything that diverts a motorist's attention away from the primary task of driving results in distracted driving. There are 3 basic forms of distraction: *visual* (taking your eyes off the road), *manual* (taking your hands off the wheel) and *cognitive* (taking your mind off of driving). While all distracted driving is dangerous, those activities that involve all three forms of distraction are the worst such as:



- Texting (reading, writing and sending a text)
- Using a cell phone or smartphone
- Eating or drinking
- Reading, including maps
- Manipulating GPS, radio, CD player or other device

## How bad is the problem?

Here is what we know: distracted driving **kills 9** people and **injures 1,060 every day** in the U.S. (NHTSA). As grim as these numbers are, the scope of the problem is likely much larger. The National Safety Council has completed at least one study which shows that distracted driving is woefully underreported. Motorists are texting (reading, sending), emailing, and talking on the phone while driving at alarming rates. We see it everywhere every day. Some people appear to be nearly addicted to their electronic devices. Don't be one of them. Stop it. Just drive. Put the phone in the trunk of your car if you can't trust yourself to ignore your device. You will hurt yourself or someone else sooner or later. It is not worth it.

## It's not just a dangerous thing to do, it's the law.

Using a handheld cell phone while driving has been illegal in Maryland for several years, but it has only been a secondary offense (officers could not stop a motorist for using a handheld cell phone unless they observed the motorist committing another traffic violation). **Effective October 1, 2013, using a handheld cell phone will become a primary offense; officers will be able to stop drivers for the sole offense of using a handheld cell phone.** Texting while driving is already a primary offense.



## Fair warning: don't gripe if you get a ticket.

Chevy Chase Village Police Chief John Fitzgerald has directed his officers to strictly enforce the laws against texting and cell phone use while driving beginning October 1. Village officers will be issuing tickets—not warnings. This is a very big problem and we're trying to make you—and everyone else—safe, so we hope you support our strict enforcement in this context.

## Watch the videos then take the Pledge.

The US Department of Transportation produced a series of compelling short videos entitled, *The Faces of Distracted Driving*. Some of them will put a lump in your throat and you can find them at the following link: <http://www.distracted.gov/content/faces/>. After you view the videos, please consider taking the pledge on the reverse of this page which is your promise to refrain from texting or talking on the phone while driving. After you sign it, keep it somewhere in your home where it will remind you of your promise. For yourself, your loved ones and for those who share the road with you, please **Put it Down and Drive.**