

## Wanna Die? Keep Textin'

Contributed by Jaedda Armstrong -- Black College Wire  
Wednesday, 01 April 2009

Auto accidents involving messaging are on the rise

How many times have you seen people swerving in their car, looking up at the road occasionally?

Or at a red light looking down in their laps when the light turns green? Nine times out of 10, they're probably texting. It happens all the time, according to a recent study by the American Automobile Association.

Half of all 18- to 24-year-olds admitted to occasionally sending text messages behind the wheel, and 14 percent of all drivers say they've done so, according to the study.

That's why I'm glad that a Senate committee has endorsed legislation that would prohibit text-messaging while driving in Virginia.

It would prohibit sending or reading text messages while driving.

Violators could be fined \$20 for a first offense and \$50 for subsequent offenses.

Unfortunately, police would only be allowed to ticket violators only if they are stopped for another offense.

Unless an officer is sitting next to, behind or in front of a driver at a stop, there's no way he or she can tell if a driver is texting.

I suspect the law will only come into play if a driver is clearly swerving in and out of traffic, or after an accident.

If it was up to me, cell phones would be banned while driving. Period. But, it's not up to me.

That's why people need to simply use common sense.

You can take your eyes off the road for a fraction of a second and your life can change &ndash; or drastically end.

Recently, a 13-year-old Taunton, Mass., girl was killed by a driver who admitted in court that he lost control of his vehicle while texting on his cell phone.

Heather Hurd, 26, died in pileup on her way to Orlando in 2008 while on her way to plan a Disney-themed wedding in Orlando last year when a tractor-trailer rammed her Mazda and killed her.

The truck driver was reaching down to grab a device to text message his company and didn't notice the eight cars and another rig stalled at a red light.

In fact, studies show driving with a phone in your hand is just as dangerous as driving with a beer in your hand.

So, go ahead and answer that text while you're on the highway if you want to. You might not make it to your exit. And that's no LOL matter.

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