

IRVING, Texas, Sept 25, 2008

The top driving distraction for Texas teens is talking on cell phones, followed by playing with the radio and having other teens in the car distracting the driver. This according to Allstate Insurance Company's Roadwatch Snapshot -- a one-day, real world look at teen driving habits aimed at raising awareness about the dangers of distracted driving.

For the Roadwatch Snapshot, student volunteers from 20 schools across Texas spent a half hour, the afternoon of September 18, near the exit of their student parking lot, tallying up the number of drivers engaged in distracted behavior while leaving school. The result -- a tally of 1,124 distractions that included kids driving with their legs and jumping from moving vehicles.

Distracted Driving Behavior	Frequency
Talking on cell phone	293
Turning on radio/high radio volume	247
Passengers distracting driver	232
Text messaging	147
Eating or drinking	95
Other distractions	91
Putting on makeup	19

Allstate says talk to your teens about driving distractions. "Motor vehicle crashes are the number one killer of teens with driver error contributing to 87 percent of all teen accidents," said Rhonda Young, an Allstate agent in Abilene. "By raising awareness about the dangers of distractions through Roadwatch, Allstate and our teen volunteers hope to save lives."

Simple activities such as talking on a cell phone, texting and switching radio stations can significantly impair a teen's ability to react quickly to changing traffic conditions. A recent survey by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) also found fatal crashes involving teen drivers are much more likely to happen when other teenagers are in the car.

During back to school time, Allstate reminds teens to back off the accelerator and reduce potentially deadly driving distractions that can contribute to driver error.

- ❖ Remember the road: Think before dialing and driving. In a recent survey, more than 55 percent of teens say they make and answer cell phone calls while driving. If it is absolutely necessary to make a call, use a hands-free device and stay focused on the road.
- ❖ Don't be a multi-tasking motorist: Make adjustments to things like mirrors and the radio before putting the car in drive. Also, plan your day accordingly so that driving time is not meal time.
- ❖ Be aware of backseat dangers: Limit the number of passengers in the car. A recent study shows 44 percent of teens said they drive more safely without friends in the car.
- ❖ Speak up: 70 percent of teens have felt unsafe when someone else was driving, but only 45 percent said they would speak up if someone was driving in a way that made them scared or uncomfortable.
- ❖ Parents matter: 89 percent of teens said their parents are influential in encouraging safer driving.

To help teens stay safer this school year, parents can initiate a conversation about smart driving using Allstate's Parent-Teen Driving Contract, <http://www.allstate.com/teen>. The contract helps set guidelines for smart driving and consequences for not living up to those expectations.

The Roadwatch Snapshot was conducted in the following Texas cities and/or surrounding areas:

Abilene	Amarillo	Austin	Corpus Christi	Dallas/Fort Worth
El Paso	Lubbock	San Antonio	Victoria	Waco