

Made possible by the support of



# NETSWork

Summaries of timely road safety news, events, and alerts.

---

July 15, 2010

---

---

## LATEST ROAD SAFETY NEWS

### Four in 10 drivers have been hit, nearly hit by distracted drivers

Source: Chicago Tribune, July 1, 2010

Nearly 4 in 10 drivers have been hit or nearly hit by a driver distracted by their cell phone, according to a new survey by Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company. And an April Nationwide survey found that more than one in four smart phone users admit to using mobile applications while driving. Distracted driving should not be taken lightly. In 2008, 6,000 people died in crashes involving distracted drivers and more than a half million people were injured, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. "The bottom line is Americans can't seem to resist the temptation to use the new technology," said Bill Windsor, Nationwide's associate vice president for consumer safety. Nationwide's June survey found the most frequently used apps are ones that access email, the Internet, Facebook and Twitter. To see the full article, go to: <http://newsblogs.chicagotribune.com/>

### National Safety Council, NETS join forces to benchmark fleet safety

Source: Automotive Fleet, June 15, 2010

The National Safety Council (NSC) is partnering with the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS) to provide NSC members with the opportunity to participate in the NETS fleet safety benchmarking program, Strength in Numbers. Organizations will be able to benchmark their fleet's performance against other participants on 25 fleet safety program elements, such as driver training programs, crash review practices, leadership engagement, and cell phone policies. More than 36 companies with a combined fleet of 350,000 participated in 2008. The program also provides several other benefits, including a free invitation to the NETS annual Fleet Safety Best Practices Conference on Oct. 13-14, 2010 in Columbus, Ohio; a subscription to the RoadSmart e-newsletter; access to members-only section of the NETS Web site to view past benchmarking reports, discuss best practices, and more. To see the full article, go to: <http://www.automotive-fleet.com/>

### Adults equally guilty of texting, talking while driving as teens

---

## Sections In This Issue

[Latest Road Safety News »](#)

[Work - Home »](#)

[Workplace Road Safety »](#)

[Innovation and Technology »](#)

[US DOT News »](#)

[Events »](#)

[Latest Research and Publications »](#)

## NETS Links

[Calendar of Traffic Safety Events »](#)

[Members Only Site »](#)

[NETS Store »](#)

## About NETSWork

NETSWork is published electronically the 15th of each month by the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety, [Lynda Morrissey](#), editor, Jack Hanley, Executive Director. It is intended for the use of NETS members.

For more information, contact [Lynda Morrissey](#)

Source: The Money Times, June 19, 2010

A new study on cell phone distractions while driving found that not only are adults guilty of texting as often as teens, but they are substantially more likely to have chatted on the phone when behind the wheel. Teens have always been at the receiving end when it comes to reckless behavior of texting when driving, but the current research shows that habit is not simply a teen issue. Adults were major offenders when it came to talking on their cell phones while driving. Nearly 61% admit to chatting as opposed to 43% of teens. To see the full article, go to: <http://www.themoneytimes.com/>

## Surprising study shows lower crash rate among older drivers

---

Source: USA Today, June 22, 2010

A new study released finds that fatal crash rates are declining among older drivers. According to research by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, the 37% decline in fatal crashes involving drivers who are older than 70 over the 9-year study period exceeded the 23% decline in drivers age 35 to 54. It looked at crashes between 1997 and 2008. Even non-fatal accidents declined for the oldsters while they increased slightly for middle-aged drivers. Yet more seniors are on the road, and more are coming as boomers age. In 1995, older drivers were 3.5 times more likely to die in crashes that were reported to law-enforcement agencies. But during the study period, the difference fell to 2.9 times worse for the older drivers. To see the full article, go to: <http://content.usatoday.com/>

## Auto recalls climbing under federal pressure

---

Source: Detroit News, July 12, 2010

Automakers this year are on pace to recall the most vehicles since 2004 as they respond to even borderline safety risks and the federal government presses the industry to react faster. In the first six months of the year, automakers recalled 10.2 million vehicles, about twice the number recalled during the same period in 2009, according to a Detroit News review of federal data. The spike this year comes in the wake of a highly publicized series of Toyota recalls. To see the full article, go to: <http://www.detnews.com/>

## Data-driven approach increases safety: NHTSA

---

Source: Canadian Driver, July 7, 2010

A Baltimore County police chief has received the highest safety honor from the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) for his department's approach to data-driven traffic safety. Two years ago, James Johnson volunteered the Baltimore County Police Department to implement the new technological initiative, Data-Driven Approaches to Crime and Traffic Safety (DDACTS). The department was one of eight across the country to participate in the approach. By mapping crashes together with other incidents, police using DDACTS can identify problem areas as they begin to develop, positioning officers in a highly visible enforcement presence to deter speeding, distracted driving and unsafe pedestrian behaviors. To see the full article, go to: <http://www.canadiandriver.com/>

## Pa. asking feds to allow ads on highway signs

---

Source: Lebanon (Pa.) Daily News, July 3, 2009

## Note from the editor

All links to stories have been tested and are active 24 hours prior to distribution, however, links may become inactive over time at the discretion of the publication source.

Pennsylvania has joined California and Florida in asking the federal government to allow the sale of advertising on electronic highway signs to generate money to fix roads and bridges. State officials say the advertising could generate \$150 million annually for each state. But traffic safety advocates argue that the ads could distract drivers and pose a road hazard. The states are asking the federal government to waive several regulations that bar advertisements on overhead and roadside changeable signs. States would contract with private companies to upgrade and maintain the electronic signs. To see the full article, go to: <http://www.ldnews.com/>

## **Gas taxes give us a break at the pump**

---

Source: USA Today, July 2, 2010

This Fourth of July holiday, motorists found the lowest gasoline taxes since the early days of the automobile and holiday drivers will pay less than ever at the pump for upkeep of the nation's roads -- just \$19 in gas taxes for every 1,000 miles driven. That's a new low in inflation-adjusted dollars, half what drivers paid in 1975. Also, Americans spent just 46 cents on gas taxes for every \$100 of income in the first quarter of 2010. That's the lowest rate since the government began keeping track in 1929. To see the full article, go to: <http://www.usatoday.com/>

## **Auto safety bill is scaled back in face of industry opposition**

---

Los Angeles Time, July 12, 2010

The sweeping legislation that grew out of Toyota Motor Corp.'s sudden-acceleration crisis has been scaled back significantly in the face of auto industry opposition. The bill originally gave federal officials the power to levy unlimited fines against automakers for safety violations, which regulators said could have resulted in multibillion-dollar penalties. But the House version now caps fines at \$200 million. In addition, a provision to set first-ever safety standards for vehicle electronics was watered down so that the Secretary of Transportation would only have to "consider" them, with the discretion to abandon them altogether. The timetable for automakers to meet any future standard was eliminated. To see the full article, go to: <http://www.latimes.com/>

## **Texting While Driving Now Banned in 30 States**

---

Source: AASHTO Journal, July 9, 2010

Massachusetts and Delaware joined the list of states that ban texting while driving as both states' governors signed bills this month outlawing the practice and setting penalties for violators. The new Massachusetts law will fine adults \$100 for texting behind the wheel as a first offense, \$250 for a second offense, and \$500 for a third. Drivers younger than 18, if caught texting or using a cell phone in any manner while driving, will receive a \$100 fine in addition to a 60-day license suspension. Delaware's law creates a comprehensive statewide restriction on handheld cell phone use. The measure also prohibits drivers from text messaging, sending or reading e-mails, or browsing websites while a vehicle is in motion. The first offense carries a penalty of \$50. A second offense carries a fine of \$100 to \$200. The law is primary, meaning police may stop drivers if they suspect a violation of this law alone. To see the full article, go to: <http://www.aashtojournal.org/>

## **Car sharing gets personal, with private vehicles for hire**

---

Source: BNET.com, July 2, 2010

California is close to revolutionizing the popular "car sharing" concept by empowering individuals to lend out their cars for pay. It has the potential to dramatically expand the whole concept, because every private car in the state will be sharable. The basic idea is that private car owners will make their cars (which sit idle on average more than 90% of the time) available to friends, neighbors or the wider public (their choice). They're reimbursed from \$5 to \$8 an hour for the time someone else is behind the wheel. Social networking, GPS and cell communications will hook people up with cars. To see the full article, go to: <http://industry.bnet.com/>

## **Study credits increase in safety projects for reduction in traffic fatalities**

---

Source: The Roadway Safety Foundation, July 1, 2010

A new report credits major federal funding increases for roadway safety engineering projects for the dramatic reduction in highway fatalities between 2006 and 2009.

The study, Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Obligations and Fatalities on U.S. Highways: Final Report, examines engineering funding increases provided under the 2005-2009 federal-aid highway law. As fatalities decline, a variety of non-engineering factors have been commonly hypothesized as responsible, such as the temporary reduction in driving that occurred with the economic downturn and fuel price spikes of 2008. The study found that none of the commonly cited reasons sufficiently explains the sharp decrease in deaths seen since the HSIP program was created. Rather, the report found that the HSIP program spending changes correlated with the sharp decrease in traffic fatalities. Further, the report estimates that the United States realizes an annual savings of \$42.7 million for every \$1 million increase of HSIP funds spent. To see the full article, go to: <http://www.roadwaysafety.org/>

## **Truck safety groups seek 8-hour driver rule**

---

Source: Journal of commerce, June 29, 2010

Truck safety groups are calling for a dramatic reduction in the time truck drivers are allowed to be behind the wheel, saying federal regulators should limit driving time to eight hours a day and 40 hours a week. The cutback from 11 hours a day would likely have a profound impact on the trucking industry and on shipping distribution networks now built around trucking networks that can stretch for hundreds of miles. The groups also said truck drivers should have a maximum 12-hour work day that includes loading and waiting. To see the full article, go to: <http://www.joc.com/>

## **State laws target safety of towed trailers**

---

Source: USA Today, July 6, 2010

States are beginning to address a highway safety issue that previously had little visibility: motorists killed in accidents involving passenger vehicles towing trailers. An average of more than one person a day dies in such crashes, according to federal data. The collisions often occur when poorly secured trailers break loose and careen into traffic. A Virginia law that took effect recently requires that any vehicle towing another vehicle or trailer have a trailer hitch or similar device strong enough for the weight of the vehicle or trailer being towed. At least four other states have considered similar measures this year, and legislators expect to revisit the issue next year. To see the full article, go to: <http://www.usatoday.com/>

## **Billboards remind Michigan drivers to 'txt back L8R'**

---

Source: Bloomberg Business Week, June 22, 2010

Billboards going up around Michigan are reminding drivers to hold off on text messaging. The Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning said recently that the billboards in major metropolitan areas will carry the phrase text back later ("txt back L8R"). They'll have one of two accompanying messages: "OR PAY \$100" or "IT'S THE LAW." In April, Gov. Jennifer Granholm signed legislation that bans sending, typing or reading text messages or e-mails while driving. A first offense will cost \$100 and repeat offenses will cost \$200. Texting will be a primary offense under Michigan's law, meaning police can pull over motorists solely for using phones to send text messages.

To see the full article, go to: <http://www.businessweek.com/>

---

## **40% of drivers want vehicles Internet wired, but restricted; yet half admit to illegally phoning/texting while driving**

Source: Marketwatch.com, June 28, 2010

A new Autobytel study reveals that not only are phoning and texting while driving still serious issues, but distracted driving has the potential to exponentially increase as Echo Boomers (35 and under) increasingly hit the road with their iPhones, iPads and various other mobile Web-surfing devices. Furthermore, the report indicates that Echo Boomers have little interest in technology from auto manufacturers that improves the safety of having wired devices and built-in electronics in their new cars.

To see the full article go to: <http://www.marketwatch.com/>

---

## **Congress considers funding for in-car alcohol detection system**

Source: NY Times, (Wheels Blog), June 25, 2010

A collaborative program between the government and the auto industry in trying to develop a device to detect drunken drivers is on track to get a six-fold increase in funding. The device, which would automatically sniff the driver's breath or use a light beam to test the alcohol content, would prevent drunken operators from starting the vehicle. There is no plan for the device to be mandatory. The program's annual budget would grow from \$2 million a year to \$12 million as part of the new Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 2010, which is awaiting consideration by the Senate. To see the full article, go to: <http://wheels.blogs.nytimes.com/>

---

## **States embrace roundabouts for intersections**

Source: USA Today, June 23, 2010

Delaware, Rhode Island, Georgia, Maryland, Nebraska and Indiana are among the states where roundabouts have been built and where more are planned. Experts say they are safer, quieter, more environmentally friendly and can be cheaper than building intersections with signs or signals. Converting a traditional intersection to a roundabout led on average to a 35% drop in crashes and a 76% drop in fatal or serious injury crashes according to one study. Over the long run, roundabouts are often cheaper than traffic signals, which have ongoing operational and maintenance costs. The biggest obstacle for roundabouts can be public acceptance, at least initially, experts say.

To see the full article, go to: <http://www.usatoday.com/>

---

## **Motorcycle safety foundation provides tips for sharing the**

## road on ride to work day

---

Source: Auto-Mobi.info, June 19, 2010

An estimated one million Americans were expected to swing a leg over their motorcycle on June 21 to help celebrate the 19th annual Ride to Work Day. As more people find motorcycles and scooters to be an economical, efficient and fun way to commute, both drivers and riders can benefit from increased awareness. To help ensure that all motorists get to work safely, the Motorcycle Safety Foundation offers a few simple rules for sharing the roads, on Ride to Work Day and every day. To see the full article, go to: <http://www.auto-mobi.info/>

[back to top](#)

---

## WORK - HOME

### Are arguing kids in the car more dangerous than drunk drivers?

---

Source: TheCarConnection.com, June 14, 2010

An article on British car Web site Whatcar is citing a report that suggests arguing children can be such a distraction for drivers, that it's almost as bad as driving while drunk. The study by the Transport Research Laboratory for insurance company Direct Line found that reaction times of drivers fell by 13 percent when fighting children were in the car. That's the same number as that of drivers who are at the British legal limit for alcohol consumption. That could add about 12 feet to the distance needed to stop at highway speeds. Distracted driving is a real concern, but most of the focus has been on cell-phone use while driving and other distractions. Not much attention has been given to the problems caused by other distractions. To see the full article, go to: <http://www.thecarconnection.com/>

### Teen driver risks in high gear over summer

---

Source: USA Today, June 23, 2010

Automobile crashes are the leading cause of death for teenagers in the USA, and the period between Memorial Day and Labor Day is the deadliest for drivers ages 15-20, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Traffic safety experts attribute the higher fatality rate to youths having more free time under less parental supervision and more opportunities to drive at night, when road risks are higher and curfews are relaxed. Over the course of a year, the hours from 10 p.m. to midnight on Fridays and Saturdays are four of the deadliest hours of the week for teens. To counter this reality, states and highway safety officials try to reach young drivers before the end of the school year and remind them -- and their parents -- to exercise extreme caution while on summer break. To see the full article, go to: <http://www.usatoday.com/>

[back to top](#)

---

## WORKPLACE ROAD SAFETY

### How's my driving? Ask my truck

---

Source: South Bend Tribune, June 26, 2010

Companies worried about the safety of their drivers' driving habits now have a way to instantly track and prevent risky maneuvers. While there are questions of privacy, a California company has been outfitting vehicles with devices that warn drivers when they've suddenly swerved or slammed on the brakes and then post the information online for managers to see. The system's maker says the technology helps slice risky driving behavior in half and is eco-friendly. Executives said clients are saving as much as \$4,000 per vehicle per year, and on average crashes have been reduced by 54%, crash repair costs slashed by 49% and fuel costs cut by up to 15%. To see the full article, go to: <http://www.southbendtribune.com/>

---

## Managing fleets into recovery - accident management

Source: Fleet News (UK) May 27, 2010

Every time a fleet driver is involved in an accident, the company needs to sell more than £22,000 (\$33,538) in product to cover the resulting costs. The startling figure, from analysis of fleet accidents carried out by Fleet Support Group (FSG), reveals the far reaching implications of a high driver incident rate. The study also found that, for many companies, nearly a third of drivers are involved in an accident every year. FSG's research of two clients reveals that, assuming a net profit margin of 5% and that the 'true' cost of crashes - lost orders and output, salaries, administration costs, legal fees and general business interruption -- is three times the claim's cost, each accident has a cost per claim of £1,116 (\$1701). Geoffrey Bray, FSG chairman, says: "That meant that the company had to sell goods to the value of £3.5 million (\$5,372,485) simply to cover the cost of the crashes. Such a large figure is alarming and should act as a wake-up call to all businesses."

To see the full article, go to: <http://www.fleetnews.co.uk/>

---

## Holding on to the benefit of driver training courses

Source: Fleet News (UK), June 8, 2010

Ensuring drivers have the correct attitude at the wheel has a major bearing on company accident prevention performance. But a surprising number of businesses have yet to grasp the financial benefits of training designed to prevent staff from slipping back into bad habits long after driver training programs have been completed. Companies that fail to conduct follow-up training risk a return to previous incident rates that can result in staff being away from their jobs for long periods to disrupt both operations and income streams. Experts say that the two words that are important in minimizing the return to bad habits are *communication* and *involvement*. To see the full article, go to: <http://www.fleetnews.co.uk/>

---

## FirstGroup America reminds motorists to eliminate distracted driving

Source: PR Newswire, June 21, 2010

FirstGroup America, the parent company of Greyhound Bus Lines, First Student (school transportation) and First Transit (public transportation), joins the National Safety Council to raise awareness for National Safety Month by reminding motorists to turn off mobile devices while driving. In 2008, FGA established one of the industry's first companywide policies prohibiting all employees or contractors on company business from using a mobile device, either hand-held or hands-free, while driving. Employees across all divisions of the company are instructed to pull over at a safe location and turn off their engine before making a call or sending a text message and are encouraged to apply this practice in their personal lives as well. To

see the full article, go to: <http://www.prnewswire.com/>

[back to top](#)

---

## INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

### **The computer program that warns drivers one hour before a traffic jam appears**

Source: The Daily Mail (UK), June 15, 2010

Computer giant IBM is developing new software that can predict whether a traffic jam is about to form an hour ahead. The system will give drivers the chance to change their planned route up to an hour before they become snarled up in heavy traffic. Using so-called predictive modeling, the software uses a combination of real-time data from road sensors and cameras with historical traffic information and weather forecasts. The information will be sent to drivers' sat-nav systems and to electronic roadside signs. Voice recommendations would be sent to a driver's mobile phone. To see the full article, go to: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/>

### **Ford to debut curve control system in new Explorer**

Source: Yahoo Finance/Associated Press, June 28, 2010

Ford Motor Co. is upgrading the electronic stability control system on the 2011 Ford Explorer to help the SUV perform better if a driver takes a curve too quickly. The curve control system uses the same sensors as Ford's stability control system, which monitors the steering wheel angle, wheel speed, tilt of the vehicle and other inputs 100 times per second. Stability control cuts the engine's power and applies the brakes to individual wheels if it senses a driver going off-course. Curve control adds another layer of monitoring and can cut power even more quickly if it senses the SUV isn't turning as fast as the driver wants it to. Curve control will be able to drop the Explorer's speed by as much as 10 miles per hour in a second. The system will be standard on the Explorer, which comes out late this year. Ford plans to add it to 90% of its North American crossovers, sport utility vehicles, trucks and vans by 2015. To see the full article, go to: <http://finance.yahoo.com/>

[back to top](#)

---

## US DOT NEWS

### **Transportation chief blasts fight against cell phone limits**

Source: Denver Post, July 8, 2010

Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood criticized a fledgling lobbying campaign during a press conference last week which he said would undermine his work to limit drivers' use of cell phones and other electronic devices while behind the wheel. LaHood responded to a document prepared by a Washington lobbying firm last month that sought to redirect a national debate on distracted driving. The document argued that the issue had been "hijacked" by celebrities like Oprah Winfrey, leaving the auto and technology industries as "collateral damage" in the discussion. The

effort, organized by Washington lobbying firm The Seward Square Group and claimed to be led by former NTSB head Jim Hall, was dropped within hours of Secretary LaHood's press conference on July 7. To see the full article, go to: <http://www.denverpost.com/>

---

## **New data show bicycling and walking up by 25%**

Source: US DOT News Release

The U.S. Department of Transportation has released new data from the Federal Highway Administration's 2009 National Household Travel Survey which shows that both bicycling and walking trips have increased by 25% since 2001. The FHWA funded Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center included this data in The National Bicycling and Walking Study: A 15-Year Status Report. The report details trends and changes in bicycling and walking since 1994. The full report can be accessed at <http://www.walkinginfo.org/>

---

## **Secretary LaHood: "Vince and Larry" become permanent additions to Smithsonian**

Source: NHTSA News Release, July 14, 2010

The U.S. Department of Transportation is donating a number of "Vince and Larry" crash-test dummy costumes and related auto safety items to the Smithsonian Institution, U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood announced. These objects now become part of the permanent collection of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History in Washington, DC. "The Vince and Larry ads, along with our high-visibility enforcement campaign *Click It or Ticket*, have proved tremendously helpful in building public awareness of seat belt use," said Administrator Strickland. "As a result, today, a record high of 84% of Americans buckle up." To see the full news release, go to: <http://www.dot.gov/>

[back to top](#)

---

## **UPCOMING TRANSPORTATION/SAFETY EVENTS**

---

### **Virginia Tech Transportation Institute to hold naturalistic driving research symposium**

The second International Symposium on Naturalistic Driving Research will be held August 31-September 2 in Blacksburg VA. The symposium will include an international review of naturalistic driving study research with panelists who are experts in the field of naturalistic driving research in their respective countries. Breakout workshops will also be conducted. For more information, go to: <http://www.cpe.vt.edu/>

---

### **GHSA annual meeting and exhibits to take place September 26-29**

GHSA's 2010 Annual Meeting is scheduled for September 26-29 in Kansas City, Missouri. The meeting, *Technology and Highway Safety: What's Driving Our Future?*, will explore both the benefits and challenges that technology presents to highway safety practitioners. For more information, go to:

<http://www.ghsa.org/>

## Register now for NETS annual Fleet Safety Best Practices Conference

---

The NETS Annual Fleet Safety Best Practices Conference will be held October 13-14, 2010 in Columbus, Oh. at the Nationwide Insurance World Headquarters. Participants are reminded to make room reservations by August 7. Please contact Liz Stevens ([lstevens@trafficsafety.org](mailto:lstevens@trafficsafety.org)) for more information.

[back to top](#)

---

## LATEST RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

### How is your state spending its transportation money?

---

Source: AASHTO News, June 28, 2010

A new database of information details how states are spending their allotment of funds on transportation enhancement programs, including walking, biking, scenic beautification, and historic preservation. The new report, "Transportation Enhancements: Summary of Nationwide Spending as of Fiscal Year 2009," was created by the National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse, and tracks spending for transportation enhancement programs, as funded through the current transportation authorizing legislation and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. To download the full report, go to <http://enhancements.org/>

---

[back to top](#)



© 2010 Network of Employers for Traffic Safety 344 Maple Avenue West #357 Vienna, VA 22180  
NETS is registered by the US Internal Revenue Service as a 501(C)3 non-profit organization

[Remove yourself from future email here](#)

Network of Employers for Traffic Safety  
344 Maple Ave. West #357  
Vienna, VA 22180  
703-273-6005  
[www.trafficsafety.org](http://www.trafficsafety.org)  
[nets@trafficsafety.org](mailto:nets@trafficsafety.org)

This message was sent to [kechkayloa@michigan.gov](mailto:kechkayloa@michigan.gov)  
pmsguid:fd.hd30.1ehi