



NW Insurance Council

Consumer Alert

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Distracted Driving Awareness Month calls attention to a deadly and costly problem
If you get a ticket, your insurance premium could be affected

What to know

- *Traffic safety experts say drivers are three times more likely to be in a crash when talking on a cell phone, and 23 times more likely to crash when entering information into a cell phone.*
- *In Idaho, distracted driving contributed to almost 1 of every 3 fatal or serious injury crashes from 2010 to 2014.*
- *Crashes caused by distracted driving can have an impact on insurance rates.*

BOISE, April 17, 2019– April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month and it's shining a spotlight on the deadly and costly trend of distracted driving. [The Idaho Department of Transportation](#) reports that distracted driving contributed to 1 of every 3 fatal or serious injury crashes from 2010 to 2014, and 80 percent of fatal distracted driving crashes occurred in rural areas.

Texting while driving is prohibited in Idaho and 45 other states and talking on a hand-held device while operating a motor vehicle is banned in 14 states. Even with those laws in place, distracted driving – spurred by increased interaction with smartphones – has become one of the most dangerous hazards on roadways today. Legislation to broaden Idaho’s texting ban failed to pass during the 2018 legislative session.

In addition to being deadly, crashes caused by distracted driving can have an impact on insurance rates as well.

“Insurers as well as traffic safety experts know that distracted driving-related crashes can impact the cost of insurance” said Kenton Brine, NW Insurance Council president. “New laws in many states, including Washington and Oregon, are intended to remind drivers about the dangers and consequences of distracted driving – but it is up to all of us to heed the warnings.”

Distracted driving is broadly defined as activity that take a driver’s attention off the road, such as eating, conversing with passengers and talking or texting on cellphones. All distractions are a reason for concern, but cell phone use while driving is the riskiest distraction for drivers.

“The best defense against auto crashes and higher insurance costs is simple,” Brine said. “When you’re driving, keep your hands on the wheel, your eyes on the road, and your mind on your driving.”

For more information about distracted driving or auto insurance, contact NW Insurance Council at 800-664-4942 or visit www.nwinsurance.org.

NW Insurance Council is a nonprofit, insurer-supported organization providing information about home, auto and business insurance to consumers, media and public policymakers in Washington, Oregon and Idaho.

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