



NW Insurance Council

Consumer Alert

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Distracted Driving Awareness Month

A distracted driving ticket could cost more than just the fine, insurers say

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 Oregon, a distracted driver could be fined up to \$1,000 for a first offense not contributing to a crash. A second offense (or a first if it contributes to a crash) could cost up to \$2,000, and a third offense within ten years could cost up to \$2,500 and six months in jail.*
- *In addition to a fine, having a distracted driving ticket on your record could increase your insurance premium, insurers report.*

PORTLAND, OR, April 06, 2022 – Distracted Driving Awareness Month kicked off this month with the deployment of extra law enforcement patrols across Oregon throughout the entire month of April, but especially during the week of April 7-11, according the Oregon Department of Transportation ([ODOT](https://www.oregon.gov/ODOT)). The extra patrols aim to specifically look for and

ticket those who are distracted by cell phones while driving and shine a spotlight on the deadly and costly behavior of distracted driving.

According to the [ODOT](#), there were 23,784 crashes in Oregon from 2015 to 2019 that involved a distracted driver, resulting in 158 fatalities and 23,403 injuries. During that same time, 64,083 drivers were convicted for a distracted driving offense.

Distracted driving is broadly defined as activity that take a driver's attention off the road. Oregon's distracted driving law places tougher restrictions on cell phone use while behind the wheel. A distracted driver could be fined \$1,000 for a first offense not contributing to a crash, and up to \$2,000 for a second offense (or a first if it contributes to a crash). A third offense will cost even more and could lead to six months in jail.

"Distracted driving is a public safety and public health issue that destroys lives and damages property, which is of great concern to everyone, not just insurance companies, so we hope drivers are beginning to make better choices when it comes to cell phone use in their vehicles," said NW Insurance Council President Kenton Brine.

Besides being deadly, crashes caused by distracted driving can have an impact on insurance rates as well. Distracted driving infractions are included in state driving records, which are available to insurance companies. More insurers now report that a distracted driving infraction on your record could increase what you pay for auto insurance, in some cases by as much as 20 percent or more.

"Whether your own insurance premium will be affected by a citation for distracted driving – and what that impact could be – will vary, depending on your insurance company and your policy," Brine said. "It's a good idea to check with your insurance company or agent to find out more about those potential consequences.

"An even better plan, however, is to avoid the ticket or the crash," Brine added. "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 Awareness Month, visit the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's [website](#). 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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