

STRAIGHT TALK LAW: TEXTING AND AUTO ACCIDENTS

We've all been conditioned after years and years of public service announcements and tragic accidents we see on the news not to drink and drive. If we see someone obviously intoxicated, most of us feel it's our obligation to intervene.

But how many of us do anything when we see someone pull out a cell phone and start texting when they should be watching the road?

As a Seattle, Washington lawyer dealing with lawsuits resulting from auto accidents, I've personally seen the unfortunate injury and damage that results from negligent drivers. That's why some recent studies on just how dangerous the combination of texting and driving is have alarmed me and many others.

The Virginia Tech Transportation Institute recently released their study results showing that people who text while driving are 23 times more likely to be in a crash. How did they arrive at this figure? They mounted a small camera in the drivers' vehicles aimed at their eyes, to see which tasks took their eyes off the road for the longest periods of time.

Texting was the clear-cut winner – taking the driver's eyes off the road for an average of 4.6 seconds. That may not seem like a long time, but it's enough to travel the length of a football field if you're traveling at 55 mph. By contrast, talking on a cell phone was much, much less of a risk – causing you to be only 1.3 times more likely to have an auto accident.

Let's be honest. If, before there were cell phones and computers, somebody told you they typed papers while they were driving, you would have thought they were completely insane. While there's no doubt that a cell phone is a lot easier to handle than a typewriter used to be, it's the same principle. You're forced to concentrate on what you're writing – instead of concentrating on where your car is going.

Many other studies corroborate the Virginia Tech findings. The Transport Research Laboratory for the British Royal Automobile Club Foundation concluded that texting while driving is a great deal more dangerous than driving drunk. Another study by the Transportation Safety Group found that distracted drivers account for nearly 80 percent of car crashes. One final statistic: a recent survey found that half of 18- to 24-year-olds text while driving.

When you add up all these facts - texting distracts drivers the most, 80% of auto accidents are caused by distracted drivers, half of 18-24 year-olds text – then a pretty frightening scenario comes into focus. A behavior more dangerous than drunk driving has taken root with our youngest drivers – meaning this is just the beginning of a growing trend. And we have to do everything we can to discourage this dangerous practice.

For more free "Straight Talk Law" information, please visit my website at www.straighttalklaw.com, where you can order free books on Washington auto accidents, auto insurance, and other valuable legal information, offered as a public service by myself.

About the Author

Jason Epstein joined Premier Law Group as a partner in 2007. Jason is a litigator handling all types of personal injury cases with an emphasis on serious plaintiff's personal injury and insurance coverage. Jason is a member of the Washington State Association for Justice and serves within its leadership. Jason often speaks at CLEs and serves as an arbitrator for both private and mandatory arbitration matters. Jason completed a certificate in Alternative Dispute Resolution from the Strauss Institute of Dispute Resolution and the Trial Advocacy program through the National Institute of Trial Advocacy. Jason has been dedicated to representing injured people since 1999. Jason Epstein has been representing individuals against insurance companies and large corporations since 2001. He limits his practice to personal injury and wrongful death cases including auto accidents, motorcycle accidents, or other serious and catastrophic injuries. Hopefully you have already visited StraightTalkLaw.com. This website is loaded with tons of information, and is constantly updated to keep you informed of recent developments. You can also stay up to date by following the blogs which are linked to StraightTalkLaw.com. Jason understands that providing the best legal representation to his clients means limiting the number of cases he accepts. He takes fewer cases so he has more time for you. By limiting his caseload, Mr. Epstein is able to give each client and each case the time and attention that they deserve. If you would like to see if your case qualifies for Mr. Epstein to represent you, please contact us through StraightTalkLaw.com, request one or more of Jason's books, or call us toll free at (888) 333-1873.