

Driving Distractions

- Jack Krivit

Two weeks ago I successfully passed my license test, meaning that I could finally drive on my own. For the days that followed, I took my parents' cars on joyrides all over town simply because I could. But as I was driving, I realized that one of the biggest threats to the safety of not only me but other drivers came from inside my car. More specifically, tucked in the right pocket of my jeans.

As teenagers learning to drive, we are constantly drilled about the importance of our choices and how greatly they can affect the people around us, so much so that we forget how important this point actually is. While driving, it is extremely easy to be distracted by your own electronic device. In fact, I am confident that every person reading this article who has driven by themselves has checked a phone or changed a song on their iPod at least once while driving.

When your eyes are anywhere other than the road, it is very difficult to tell what is happening around you. Not only this, but you are putting your own life, among the lives of anyone around you, in danger by doing this. I myself have found it difficult to pay complete attention to the road while driving, not because I'm bored, but because there are so many other things that need my attention. When my phone rings, I feel the need to fish it out of my pocket and answer. And when a song that I don't want to listen to plays on my iPod, I find myself mindlessly changing it while only one hand holds the wheel. I don't do this often, but I do it enough that it got me thinking. I am a young driver, meaning that I am more cautious than people who have driven for years. If it is difficult for me to keep my eyes on the road and I have the sense enough to remind myself to stop, how much more likely is it that an experienced driver will do this simply because they have so much more confidence? Probably very.

There are no 100 percent successful alternatives to looking directly at your device while driving, mainly because they would all require you to pay attention to something that isn't the road. There are ways to limit the amount of time you are distracted, but ultimately they are still distractions. If you absolutely need to get in touch with someone, I would recommend calling them instead of typing, however this should still only be done if you can drive with one hand. It is impossible to pay absolute attention to one thing, and even when you are driving, your attention is constantly moving around based on what moves in front of you. It is important to remember that with all the things a driver has to pay attention to outside of the car (which is literally everything), there's no room for any other distractions inside the car. So drivers, be responsible, not only because it's illegal not to be, but because you might save a life, including your own.