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Mass.gov

Distracted driving

You're not the problem, right? It's the other guy...

Don't Be That Guy

It's safe to say, at this point, that most people know that distracted driving is a bad idea. Over the last decade, public service campaigns from the government, nonprofits, and even phone companies have raised awareness of the dire consequences of texting and driving. New laws have placed serious restrictions on what people can do with their phones in their cars. And yet, in Massachusetts, the number of distracted crashes has risen 170 percent from 2014-2016.

It's time for ads to go beyond awareness and start focusing on behavior

change. A major challenge to this is what researchers call the “third person” effect: when people are reminded of the dangers of texting and driving, they assume it’s the other guy who’s the problem. Not them—they’re great at multitasking.

To that end, our ad below for Distracted Driving Awareness Month this April, aims to close the gap between our behavior and our self-perception by showing how we become *that guy* – the one who puts us all in danger – when we text and drive. The good news is that we can do something about *that guy* inside of us by remembering when we get behind the wheel- **just drive.**

Additional Resources

"Don't Be That Guy" billboard

(<https://www.mass.gov/doc/dont-be-that-guy-billboard/download>) (PDF 1.45 MB)

"Just Drive" logo (<https://www.mass.gov/doc/just-drive-logo/download>)

(JPG 41.24 KB)

10 tips for managing driver distractions

1. **Turn it off.** Turn your phone off or switch to silent mode before you get in the car. Or better yet, put the phone away in a place it cannot be accessed while driving.
2. **Spread the word.** Set up a special message to tell callers that you are

driving and you'll get back to them as soon as possible, or sign up for a service that offers this.

3. **Pull over.** If you need to make a call, pull over to a safe area first.
4. **Use your passengers.** Ask a passenger to communicate for you.
5. **X the text.** Don't ever text and drive, surf the web or read your email while driving. It is dangerous and against the law in most states.
6. **Know the law.** Familiarize yourself with state and local laws before you get in the car.
7. **Prepare.** Start your GPS or review maps and directions before you start to drive. If you need help when you are on the road, ask a passenger to help or pull over to a safe location to review the map and/or directions.
8. **Secure your pets.** Pets can be a big distraction in the car. Always secure your pets properly before you start to drive.
9. **Keep the kids safe.** Pull over to a safe location to address situations with your children in the car.
10. **Focus on the task at hand.** Refrain from smoking, eating, drinking, reading and any other activity that takes your mind and eyes off the road.

Additional Resources

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA)

Distracted Driving webpage

(<https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/distracted-driving>)

Governors Highway Safety Association's (GHSA) Distracted Driving

webpage (<http://www.ghsa.org/issues/distracted-driving>)

National Safety Council (<http://www.nsc.org/pages/home.aspx>)

Northeast AAA - Roadway Safety Information

(<https://northeast.aaa.com/community.html>)

Massachusetts' Safe Driving Law

Massachusetts has had a Safe Driving Law effective as of September 2010. The law bans sending, typing or reading electronic messages to or from handheld devices while operating a motor vehicle. This includes use of the internet and text messaging. The law also bans all handheld electronic by junior operators while behind the wheel.

Read the [entire summary of the Safe Driving Law on the Registry of Motor Vehicles website](http://www.massrmv.com/SafeDrivingLawSummary.aspx) (<http://www.massrmv.com/SafeDrivingLawSummary.aspx>).

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