

## 63 percent under 30 admit driving while on phone

March 7 2011, By JIM FITZGERALD , Associated Press

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(AP) -- The U.S. Department of Transportation and Consumer Reports magazine have released a poll that illustrates how widespread distracted driving is among young people and a plan to help fight it.

The poll says 63 percent of people under 30 acknowledge driving while using a handheld phone and 30 percent say they've sent text messages while behind the wheel. For those over 30, the percentages were 41 percent on the phone and 9 percent texting.

Only about a third of the young people said they feel such behavior is very dangerous.

"Distracted driving has become a deadly epidemic on America's roads, and teens are especially vulnerable because of their inexperience behind the wheel and, often, [peer pressure](#)," said Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood.

The Department of Transportation says nearly 5,500 people in the U.S. were killed in distracted driving accidents in 2009.

LaHood and Consumers Union President Jim Guest announced a partnership to help parents, teachers and teens battle [distracted driving](#). A guide for parents and educators is being made available online and will be distributed to schools and volunteer groups. A public service announcement is being sent to TV stations, and a video meant for retail stores is expected to reach as many as 100 million people.

Consumer Reports notes three deadly statistics:

- Car crashes are the leading cause of death for teens.
- Teens are involved in three times as many fatal crashes as other drivers.
- The risk of collision is 23 times more likely while [texting](#).

**More information:** Online: <http://distraction.gov>

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