

US drivers see texting risks but still do it: survey

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A sign notifies drivers of a new texting while driving law in California. Most young US drivers believe that texting and phone use at the wheel is dangerous, but many do it anyway, a survey showed Tuesday.

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The Consumer Reports survey of 16- to 21-year-olds found eight of 10 believed the use of smartphones at the wheel is a risk, 29 percent admitted doing it in the past month.

And 47 percent reported that they had made a [phone call](#) without a headset while behind the wheel, even though nearly two-thirds acknowledged that the behavior was perilous.

Some in the survey said they had reduced or stopped the activities linked to distracted driving, after learning of the dangers or because of laws banning phone use or [texting](#) in cars. Nearly 20 percent knew someone who had been in a crash caused by distracted driving.

The survey also showed that [peer pressure](#) may be curbing distracted driving -- almost half who have driven with friends said they were less likely to talk on a handheld cell phone or text when friends were passengers.

"Our survey showed that while far too many young people are driving while distracted, they are less likely to do so when their parents, friends, or [siblings](#) set a good example," said Rik Paul, Consumer Reports auto editor.

"We encourage everyone to stop the car in a safe place if they need to use a cell phone. And if they're riding with a driver using a handheld phone, ask him or her to put it down and stop gambling with their safety."

The report was based on a survey of 1,049 persons between 16 and 21.

The top US [transportation safety](#) body has recommended that all 50 US states impose a strict ban on the use of cellphones -- both hand-held and hands-free -- while driving.

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