

US drivers talk and text as much as ever

April 5 2013



Cars drive by a sign notifying of a new texting while driving law on December 29, 2008 in San Francisco, California. Americans are using cellphones and other gadgets behind the wheel as much as ever, despite widespread awareness of the risks involved, a federal government agency said Friday.

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Citing a 2011 survey, the [National Highway Traffic Safety](#)

[Administration](#) (NHTSA) said 660,000 Americans are talking or texting while driving at any given moment, a number unchanged from the previous year.

At the same time, 74 percent of American drivers support a ban on hand-held cellphone use on the road, and 94 percent favor a [prohibition](#) on texting while driving, it said, citing a 2012 survey.

Thirty-nine of the 50 states now ban text messaging behind the wheel, and 10 states forbid handheld cellphone use—although observers say those bans are frequently ignored.

In a statement Friday coinciding with National Distracted Driving Awareness Month, [Transportation Secretary](#) Ray LaHood called distracted driving "a serious and deadly epidemic" on US roads.

According to NHTSA data, more than 3,300 people were killed and 387,000 injured in crashes involving a distracted driver in 2011, the most recent year for which statistics were available.

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