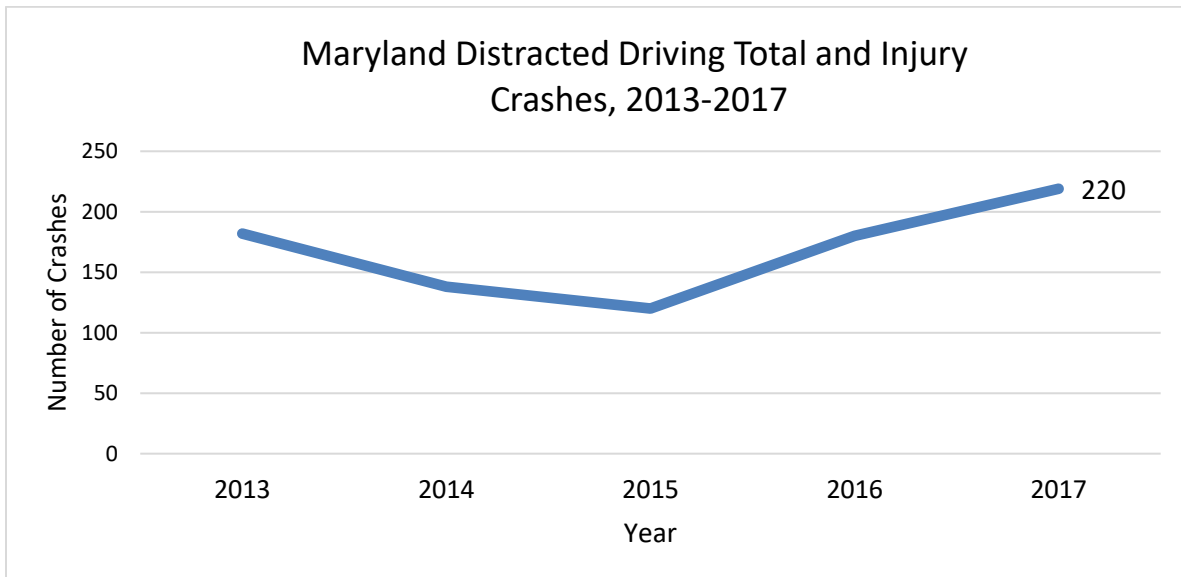
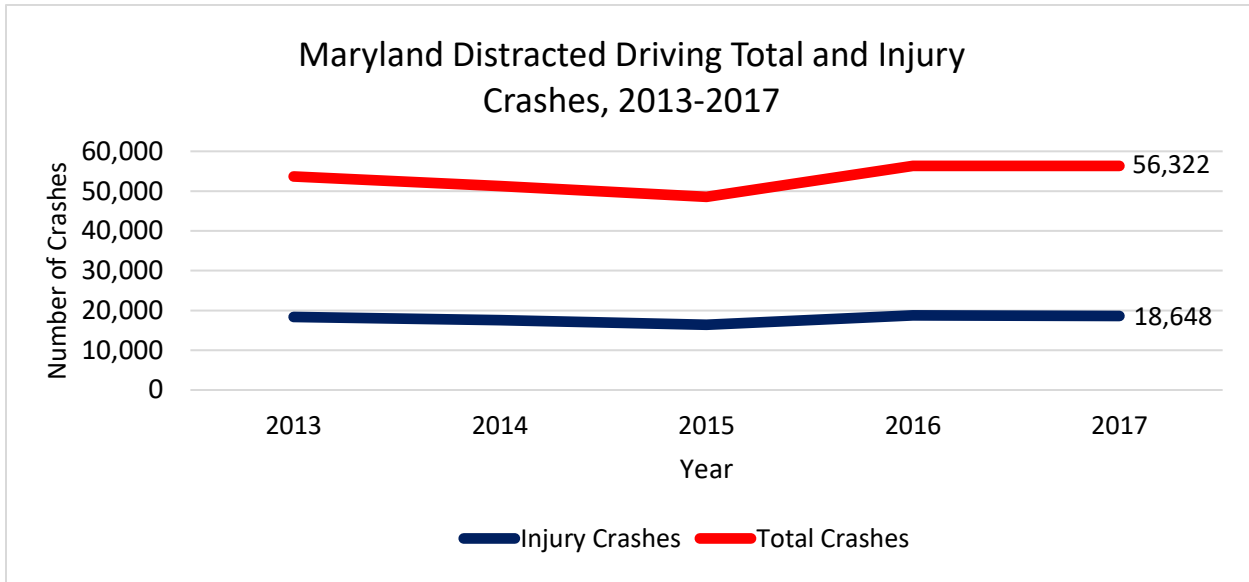


## DISTRACTED DRIVING PROGRAM AREA BRIEF

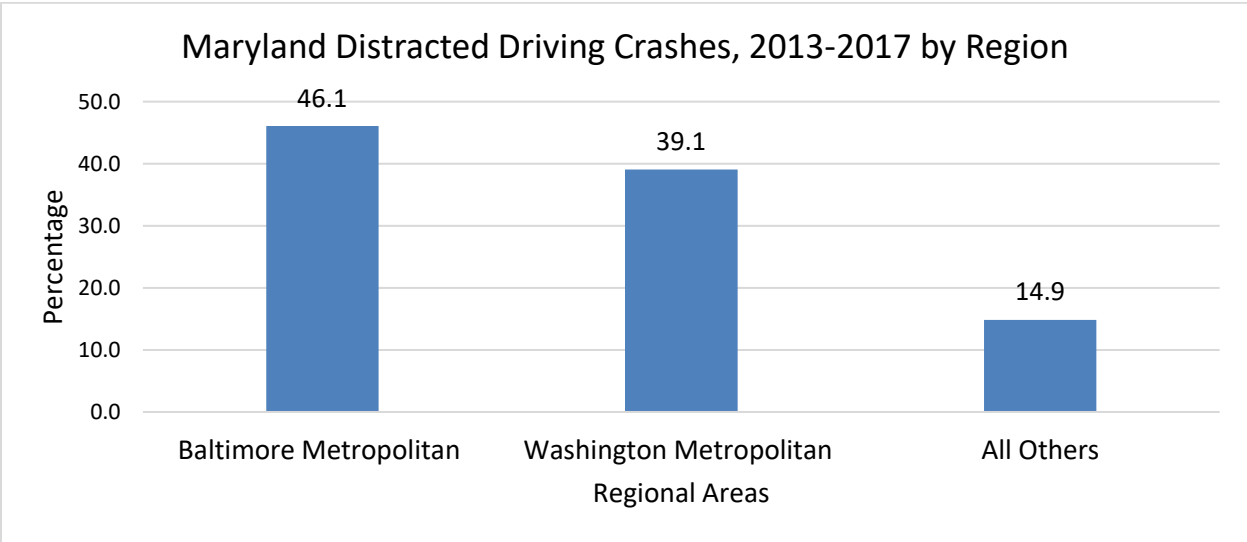
### THE FACTS



**Distracted driving is defined as:** having values of either Failure to Pay Full Time and Attention or Cell Phone in Use in any of the four available contributing circumstance fields on the Maryland crash form. Due to the broad use of “Failure to Pay Full Time and Attention” by law enforcement and the self-reported nature of “Cell Phone in Use,” Maryland distracted data represents both an over-reporting and under-reporting of the specific types of distraction while driving.

- **Motor vehicle crashes are a huge threat to public health.** Over the past decade, the number of crashes reported on the nation’s roadways has declined annually. However, motor vehicle crashes continue to be a leading cause of death in the United States<sup>1</sup>. In 2016, approximately 7.3 million crashes were reported; approximately 44 percent resulted in an injury or fatality<sup>2</sup>.
- **The number of distracted driving crashes occurring in Maryland each year is declining.** Consistent with Maryland’s statewide trend, average annual crashes related to distracted driving has steadily declined. Simultaneously, fatalities have declined, with a 48 percent decrease since 2011. Distracted driving contributes to 45 percent of all crashes in Maryland.
- **Injuries are high in distracted driving crashes.** Close to four out of every five of the more than 50,000 distracted driving crashes that occurred annually resulted in an injury. On average, approximately 27,000 people are injured or killed per year because of distracted driving.
- **Metropolitan areas have the highest concentration of distracted driving crashes<sup>3</sup>.** The Baltimore and Washington metropolitan areas accounted for nearly 85 percent of crashes related to distracted driving.

**On average, approximately  
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or killed annually in the U.S  
because of *distracted*  
driving crashes.**



- **Weekdays and afternoons to early evening hours have the highest number of crashes.** Distracted driving crashes were spread consistently throughout the months and the days of the week. However, Fridays showed a slight increase in the number of crashes that occurred, and

<sup>1</sup> CDC National Vital Statistics Reports – 10 Leading Causes of Death, United States, 2016

<sup>2</sup> NHTSA Traffic Safety Facts – Overview DOT HS 812 016

<sup>3</sup> Baltimore Metropolitan area is comprised of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard Counties, and Baltimore City as designated by the Baltimore Metropolitan Council. The Washington Metropolitan Area is defined as Charles, Frederick, Montgomery, and Prince George's Counties as designated by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

Sundays experienced the lowest number of distracted driving crashes. From noon through the early evening, the number of distracted driving crashes rose. However, after 5 p.m. they began to decline.

- **Drivers under 30 years old account for nearly 35 percent of all distracted drivers involved in crashes.** Nearly a quarter of the drivers involved in distracted driving crashes were between the ages of 21 and 29. More distracted drivers were males (56 percent) and 80 percent of those killed were also male.

## BACKGROUND

Distracted driving is any activity that diverts a driver's attention away from the primary task of driving. All distractions endanger drivers, passengers and pedestrians.

Most distractions involve cognitive and sensory distraction. Just making a call on a hand-held phone alone involves holding, looking at, and touching the phone, dialing, and listening to and thinking about the conversation.

### Types of driver distractions:

- Visual – looking at something other than the road
- Auditory – hearing something not related to driving
- Manual – manipulating something other than the wheel
- Cognitive – thinking about something other than driving

## MARYLAND'S DISTRACTED DRIVING LAWS

Maryland law prohibits the use of a handheld cell phone and texting while driving.

- The law states, **"A driver of a motor vehicle that is in motion may not use the driver's hands to use a handheld telephone other than to initiate or terminate a wireless telephone call or to turn on or turn off the handheld telephone."**
- First-time offenders face a maximum of an \$83 fine, second-time offenders a maximum of \$140 fine, and third-time offenders a maximum of \$160 fine (all figures include court costs). Points cannot be given unless the offence results in a crash.
- Exceptions to this law are made in the case of emergency calls to: 9-1-1, a hospital, an ambulance service provider, a fire department, law enforcement, or a first aid squad.

Drivers also can be ticketed for writing, sending, or reading a text or electronic message while driving.

- The fine is \$70 and one point, and if the use of the device contributes to a crash, the fine may increase to \$110 and three points.

Jake's Law:

- A driver that causes serious injury or death while talking on a handheld cell phone or texting may receive a prison sentence of up to three years and a fine up to \$5,000.

## MARYLAND'S DISTRACTED DRIVING PREVENTION PROGRAMS

- Maryland has developed a campaign called "Park the Phone before You Drive." The campaign's materials are distributed to Maryland's traffic safety partners. Outreach is also targeted toward Maryland's law enforcement community regarding the proper enforcement of Maryland's handheld cell phone law.
- Distracted Driving is one of the main components of Maryland's Strategic Highway Safety Plan, with a specific team of personnel responsible for leading initiatives to reduce distracted driving-related crashes.
- Distracted driving is a pillar to Maryland's Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) campaign. Information on TZD may be found here – <http://www.towardzerodeathsmd.com/>
- The U.S. Department of Transportation has launched a variety of creative campaigns to raise awareness about the dangers of distracted driving. With the help of numerous safety partners, safety officials have made public outreach to millions of Americans with the important and new Ad Council message that, "One Text or Call Could Wreck It All."
- For information about Distracted Driving visit: [www.distraction.gov](http://www.distraction.gov).

## DISTRACTED DRIVING SAFETY TIPS

Nearly everyone is guilty of some form of distracted driving. In fact, distracted drivers are almost everywhere you look. Here are some good ideas to help you drive more safely:

- **Use your cell phone for emergency situations only.** A cell phone should only be used for emergency purposes, and it's best to pull over safely to the right shoulder to make a call. Hands-free devices can still cause you to miss important visual and audio cues needed to avoid a crash.
- **If you are drowsy, pull off the road.** Drowsiness increases the risk of a crash by four times.
- **You should limit the number of passengers, as well as the level of activity inside the car.** Most states' graduated driver licensing laws prohibit teens from having teenage passengers in the car with them during their early months of driving. Driving with friends can create a dangerous driving environment because novice drivers are focused on their friends rather than the road.
- **Avoid eating while driving.** Being busy is no excuse for distracted driving. Finishing your breakfast on the way to work or school may seem like a time-saver, but it means you are less attentive to the drivers around you. Food spills are a major cause of distraction.
- **Do your multi-tasking outside the car.** Everyone spends a lot of time in their vehicles, and it may seem like the perfect time to get little things done: calling friends, searching for good music, maybe even text messaging. Don't do it. Focus on the road and the drivers around you. Get everything settled before you start driving.

## **WHO TO CONTACT ABOUT DISTRACTED DRIVING IN MARYLAND**

### **MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION MOTOR VEHICLE ADMINISTRATION**

- Contact: MDOT MVA's Press Information at 410-762-5188