

Facts & figures on distracted driving — data is pulled from the [Cambridge Mobile Telematics](#) *The State of US Road Risk in 2024* unless otherwise specified.

NATIONAL (See Florida data on page 3):

Since 2020, more than 160,000 people have died senselessly in road tragedies, over 40,000 people per year.

In 2021, road fatalities peaked at 42,939, the highest number since 2008, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). That number dropped 3.6% in 2023, when 40,990 people died in car crashes — about the same as 200 Boeing 737 Maxes crashing in a year.

Some 34% of crashes occur within one minute of distracted driving.

Almost 70% of trips in 2023 included some form of screen interaction. The 10% of drivers who interact with their phone screen while driving the most are 240% more likely to crash than drivers who don't.

In 2022, drivers reached peak distraction levels, spending 2 minutes and 12 seconds of every hour driving using their phone.

Using models similar to those applied to impaired driving, NHTSA estimates that nearly 30% of crashes are due to distraction. Using that model, researchers project that distracted driving caused 12,581 preventable deaths in 2021.

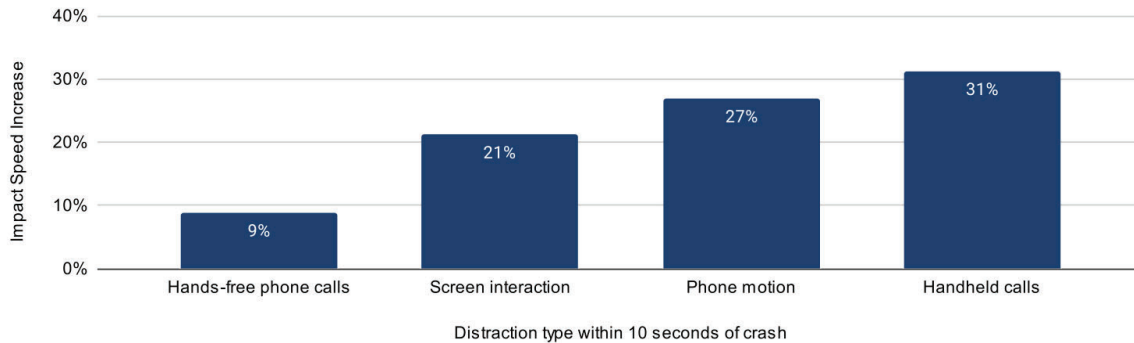
Phone screen interaction — where drivers are tapping their phone's screen and a key contributor to crashes and fatalities — increased 17.8% from 2020 to 2023.

There was a slight drop in such fatalities last year, which CMT attributes to more states passing hands-free laws and increased media attention on the devastating effects of distracted driving.

- This reduction prevented an estimated 55,000 crashes, 31,000 injuries, 250 fatalities, and close to \$2.2 billion in economic damages in 2023.
- The four states that introduced handheld bans in 2023 have prevented an estimated 8,200 crashes and 37 fatalities through early March 2024.
- Hands-free states overall saw 9.5% lower rates of phone distraction in 2023 compared to states with no-texting laws.
 - In Ohio, handheld phone calls fell by 12% in the first six months. Hands-free phone calls fell by 8% in the same time period.
- In 2023, the media produced over 67,000 articles about smartphone distracted driving, resulting in 3.6 billion impressions, a 31% increase over 2021.
 - In 2021, there were 42,500 articles. Since then, the number of articles has grown by an average of 25% per year.
 - Distracted driving stories saw 2.7 billion impressions in 2021; by 2023, distraction article reach jumped by 31%, hitting 3.6 billion impressions.

- Prominent articles from the past 12 months include The New York Times' [Why Are American Drivers So Deadly?](#), Vox's [American drivers are now even more distracted by their phones. Pedestrian deaths are soaring](#), and the Tampa Bay Times' editorial titled: [Texting while driving? Why doesn't Florida ban holding a phone while driving?](#)

Distracted driving also correlates to driver speed during crashes — CMT:



Currently, 29 states have hands-free laws making it illegal for drivers to handle their phones while driving.

- Texting while driving is now illegal in every state except for Montana, which saw the biggest increase in phone motion distraction in 2023, rising nearly 11%.
- States with hands-free laws saw 1 minute and 35 seconds of phone motion distraction per hour in 2023.
- The states without a hands-free law, however, suffered 1 minute and 44 seconds of phone motion distraction per hour on average, an increase of 9.5%.
- Montana, the only state without a texting law, experienced 1 minute and 45 seconds of phone motion distraction. *The Montana result is essentially the same as states with texting laws, which speaks to their general lack of effectiveness.*
- *The disparity between the states with hands-free laws and those without puts 120 million drivers at higher risk from distracted driving.*

FLORIDA:

- In 2023, 391,428 crashes caused 3,331 deaths and more than 250,000 injuries. ([Florida Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles](#), preliminary data from 2023)
- Hillsborough County, Fla. — highest traffic fatality rate in America with 67.6 deaths per 100,000 residents (NYTM: Drivers so Deadly).
 - In 2023, the county had 27,441 crashes causing 228 deaths and almost 19,000 injuries.
- Florida had the third highest fatality rate of any state with 1,772 between January and June 2023 out of its 22.6 million residents, (preliminary data from the [National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration](#) and census data)

- Only Texas (2,089 fatalities and almost 30.5 million residents) and California (2,061 fatalities and 39 million people) ranked higher.

HANDS-FREE:

[Which States are hands-free?](#) <- An interactive map detailing laws by state

- States that implement and enforce hands-free driving laws see a **staggering reduction** in fatal car crashes among teens, according to a **10-year study** conducted by Mass General researchers for the American Academy of Pediatrics.
 - When the study began, only 15 states had a form of distracted driving laws. By 2017 when it concluded, 40 states had primary enforcement texting bans, 6 states had secondary enforcement texting bans, 34 states banned all cellphone use for novice drivers, and 12 banned handheld cellphones for all drivers
- **Nationwide Insurance Survey:** 86 percent of drivers support hands-free legislation and 88% of consumers say they support legislation to address distracted driving.