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Communications

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NSC Survey: Parents Less Likely to be Distracted by Technology when Driving with Children

During Distracted Driving Awareness Month, NSC and CVVFA urge drivers to put their phones away to keep others safe

Itasca, IL – Parents rank texts, phone calls and children in the backseat as the top three driving distractions, according to a new survey released today from the [National Safety Council](#) (NSC) and the [Cumberland Valley Volunteer Firemen’s Association](#) (CVVFA) [Emergency Responder Safety Institute](#). While backseat passengers certainly demand extra attention, the survey encouragingly found parents are less likely to be distracted by technology when driving with their children in the car.

In the [survey](#) of 1,000 drivers ages 25 years and older who drive with children, nearly two-thirds of respondents admitted to regularly or occasionally programming a navigation system while driving alone; that risky behavior dropped 20% when children were present in the car. Similarly, more than half of parents surveyed admitted to regularly or occasionally talking on the phone while driving, which dropped 13% when children were along for the ride.

Parents also ranked the top deterrents to phone use while driving, which included having your child tell you they felt scared when you used your phone, having a loved one injured or killed, or being involved in a crash yourself.

“The harsh reality is that thousands lose their lives each year in crashes where distracted driving plays a role,” said Lorraine Martin, president and CEO of the National Safety Council. “We should all drive as though we have a loved one in our car on every trip, every time.”

NSC is releasing the survey ahead of Distracted Driving Awareness Month, observed every April, to raise awareness and educate about the importance of being attentive behind the wheel. Funding for the survey was provided to the National Safety Council by the Cumberland Valley Volunteer Firemen’s Association (CVVFA) Emergency Responder Safety Institute through a Fire Prevention and Safety Grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security/FEMA. First responders, in particular, are greatly affected by other motorists’ unsafe driving behavior as they come to the aid of people at roadway incident scenes, with an average of 100 workers killed or injured annually.

“Distraction-free driving keeps everyone safe, including first responders who put their lives in harm’s way to help when emergencies occur,” said Dr. Candice McDonald, 2nd Vice President of the nonprofit Cumberland Valley Volunteer Firemen’s Association that oversees ResponderSafety.com. “When you see lights, vests or emergency vehicles, slow down and move over. Focus strictly on your driving. Help us do our job safely so we can get home to our families.”

Other important findings from the poll include:

- Four-in-five respondents unsafely use their phone when driving, whether in hand or hands-free.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted people’s driving habits with 11% of drivers surveyed admitting to driving faster than the speed limit, due to less congestion and traffic.
- This came as no surprise to about a quarter of drivers surveyed who felt behaviors such as speeding, technology distractions and driver fatigue were occurring more often due to COVID-19.
- Most still underestimate the risk emergency responders face when on the side of the highway. Only two-in-five consider a higher risk when seeing an emergency responder out of their vehicle on a highway.

NSC and CVVFA urge all drivers to put their phones away and just drive. Take action today by:

- Committing to drive distraction-free by taking the [NSC Just Drive Pledge](#).
- [Donating](#) to NSC to help keep the roads safe for you and your loved ones.
- Joining the [Road to Zero coalition](#), a multi-sector, multi-modal approach to improving traffic safety, and its call to for Zero Traffic Deaths by 2050.
- Driving attentively to [safely pass an emergency scene](#) while [slowing down and moving over for emergency vehicles](#).
- Visiting nsc.org/justdrive for ready-to-use resources to share in your workplace and community.

About the National Safety Council

The [National Safety Council](#) is America’s leading nonprofit safety advocate – and has been for over 100 years. As a mission-based organization, we work to eliminate the leading causes of preventable death and injury, focusing our efforts on the workplace, roadway and impairment. We create a culture of safety to not only keep people safer at work, but also beyond the workplace so they can live their fullest lives.

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