

Distracted Driver Report

Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles
Office of Management Research and Development

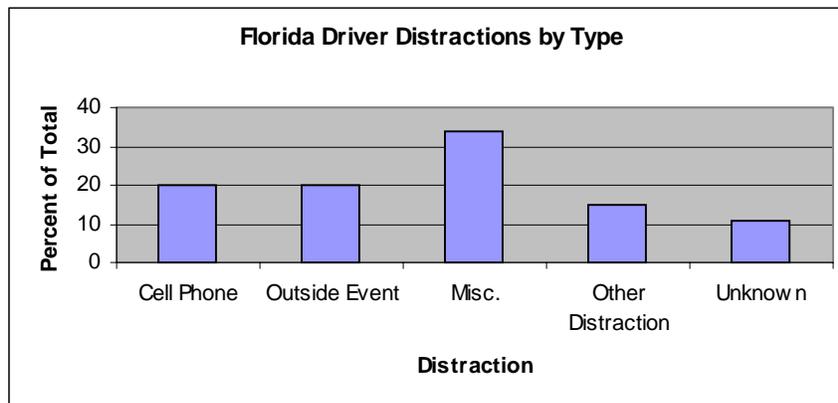


December 2004

Executive Summary

Chapter 2002-179, Laws of Florida, directed the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to identify the major sources of distraction to drivers and the significance of distractions as potential causes of crashes¹. Although this was a one-time requirement, this report presents the reported frequency of Florida crashes caused by various forms of driver distractions in 2003, a comparison of distractions for the years 2001-2003 for Florida, and a comparison of driver distractions for Florida with the U.S. and other selected states.

There were 1,796 crashes in Florida that were identified as being caused by distracted drivers during 2003. This is less than one percent (0.7 percent) of the total traffic crashes (243,294) reported for 2003. Approximately 20 percent of the distracted drivers were reported as "talking or listening on a cell phone" at the time of the crash; 20 percent were attributed to "outside person, object, or event;" 34 percent were distributed among eight miscellaneous categories such as "eating or drinking" and "adjusting radio/cassette/CD;" 15 percent of the crashes were attributed to "other distractions;" and approximately 11 percent were "unknown distraction." The following bar chart displays the percentage distribution of driver distractions:



In conclusion, as in the previous distracted driver report utilizing 2001 data, this report does not indicate that distracted drivers are a major contributing cause of crashes in the state of Florida. Additionally, Florida's distracted driver crash causal rate, .7 percent, is much lower than that of the U.S. and Pennsylvania rates, at 8.3 percent and 3.5 percent, respectively (note: Pennsylvania was utilized in this report due to comparable data availability). Although this report is descriptive vs. explanatory in nature, it provides valuable demographic information that can be utilized in the future for further study.

¹ Crash as used in this report, is a vehicular accident that is reported to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles on what is commonly referred to as the "long form report." This report is mandatory if the crash involves death or injury, leaving the scene of an accident, or DUI, and may be used by the investigating officer in other types of crashes.

Report Highlights:

There were 1,796 crashes in Florida that were identified as being caused by distracted drivers during 2003, accounting for less than one percent (0.7 percent) of the total traffic crashes reported for 2003. However, it should be noted that distractions were identified by staff from law enforcement crash reports, which are dependent in part upon driver and witness accounts of the respective crash, as well as the investigating officer's interpretation and documentation of the crash.

Approximately 20 percent of the distracted drivers were reported as "talking or listening on a cell phone" at the time of the crash; 20 percent were attributed to "outside person, object, or event;" 34 percent were distributed among 8 miscellaneous categories such as "eating or drinking;" 15 percent of the crashes were attributed to "other distractions;" and 11 percent were "unknown distraction." (see p. 6)

Drivers in the age group 30 through 49 accounted for the largest percentage of driver distracted crashes. However, when compared to the number of licensed drivers in this age group they do not appear to be overrepresented and in fact are slightly underrepresented. When looking at the age group of persons under 30 as compared to the age group 50 and over, this study shows that younger drivers had a significantly higher distraction rate. Additionally, there was a higher incidence of cell phone distracted crashes for the under 50 age group. (see p. 7)

Males are significantly more likely to have a crash due to a distraction than females (57.96 versus 40.09 percent). With regard to specific types of distractions, male drivers tend to be more distracted than females while "adjusting radios, cassettes, or CD players" and by "other distractions." Females are more distracted by having "other occupant in vehicle," "moving object in vehicle," and "using/dialing cell phone." (see p. 8)

There is a relatively large distraction percentage total (79.34 percent) for state, county, and local roads; however, when the number of road miles for these road types are taken into account, these percentages are fairly proportionate to the road mileages. There is considerable variability in percentages across road types. For example, on Interstates, local, private, and all other road types, "outside person, object, or event" represented the largest distraction percentage; on state, county, and turnpike/toll roads, "using/dialing cell phone" accounted for the largest distraction percentage; and on U.S. roads, the largest distraction was "other distraction." (see p. 9)

Approximately 66 percent of all crashes resulting from driver distraction occurred during daylight hours (6:00 AM-5:59 PM), with 34 percent occurring during non-daylight hours (6:00PM-5:59AM). Of the total distraction crashes that occurred during daylight hours, approximately 21 percent were attributed to "outside person, object, or event" followed next in order by 18 percent attributed to "using/dialing cell phone." During the non-daylight hours, this order was reversed, with 25 percent attributed to "using/dialing cell phone" and 18 percent due to "outside person, object, or event." (see p. 10)

For the three year period 2001-2003, the percent of total distractions increased substantially for the two categories "outside person, object, or event" and "other device/object brought into vehicle." With regard to decreases, the category "unknown distraction not specified" decreased dramatically as did the "smoking related" distraction. The largest percentage distraction "using/dialing cell phone" remained relatively constant over the three year period, as did the remainder of the distraction categories. (see p. 13)

Florida's distracted driver crash causal rate, .7 percent, is much lower than that of the U.S. and Pennsylvania rates, at 8.3 percent and 3.5 percent, respectively. However, with only a few exceptions, the majority of distraction categories, expressed as a percent of total distraction caused crashes, are fairly close between the three entities. (see p. 14)

Introduction:

Driver distraction occurs when some event, object, or person within or outside a vehicle compels or induces the driver's shifting of attention away from the driving task. The presence of a triggering event distinguishes a distracted driver from one who is simply inattentive or lost in thought. However, for purposes of this report, for the Florida data, both were reported by Florida law enforcement officials as being "distracted" and are presented as such.

Chapter 2002-179, Laws of Florida, directed the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to identify the major sources of distraction to drivers and the significance of distractions as potential causes of crashes. This report presents:

- 1) The reported frequency of Florida crashes caused by various categories of driver distractions for 2003.
- 2) A comparison of driver distractions for Florida for the years 2001-2003.
- 3) A comparison of driver distractions for Florida, the U.S. and other selected states.
- 4) A guide to avoid driver distractions.

The findings of this report should be of interest to legislators, licensing agencies, law enforcement, and traffic safety organizations.



Distraction Categories:

Eating/Drinking:

Eating (burger, not specified)

Drinking (tea, coffee, soda, alcohol, juice, not specified)

Eating or drinking not specified

Outside Person, Object or Event:

Outside traffic/vehicle (vehicle swerved, turned in front of, changed lanes, slowed or stopped, encroached on lane emergency vehicle, bright vehicle lights, etc.)

Police (being chased by police, officer-directing traffic, thought saw police)
Animal in roadway (deer, dog, animal not specified)
Sunlight, sunset
People/objects in roadway (child in road, basketball game, crowd, broken glass, garbage can, etc.)
Crash scene/leaving scene of crash
Road construction
Other (waved ahead by driver, another person or driver, parachutes in sky, bicycle, toll booth, brush obstructing vision, tire blowout, etc.)
Outside object, person or event not specified

Adjusting Radio/Cassette/CD

Other Occupant in Vehicle:

Talking, arguing, conversing with passenger
Passenger doing something (yelling, grabbing, reaching, fighting, sleeping)
Child infant distraction
Other (looking at passenger, helping buckle seat belt, rear seat passenger not specified)
Other occupant not identified

Moving Object in Vehicle:

Dog (barking, jumping, hitting steering wheel)
Bee/bug/insect (swatting, flying into window, in vehicle)
Other (objects falling off seat, spilled groceries, spilled beverage, object rolling under brake pedal, sick cat)
Moving object not specified

Smoking Related:

Reaching/looking for/getting cigarette
Lighting cigarette
Dropped cigarette
Cigarette blew back into vehicle
Smoking cigarette not specified

Using/Dialing Cell Phone:

Dialing cellular phone
Answering cell phone/cell phone ringing
Cell phone use not specified

Other Device/Object Brought into Vehicle:

Reaching for something on floor (cassette, water bottle, purse, not specified)
Other (reaching for candy, dishes falling, object in basket, something in front passenger seat, throwing away trash, rolling down window, reaching for thermos, getting makeup, using data terminal)
Other not specified

Using Other Device Integral to Vehicle:

Adjusting mirrors, lights, wiper, fastening seat belt, etc.
Adjusting climate control not specified
Other not specified

Other Distraction:

Medical problem (heart attack, blackout, medication, loss of consciousness, seizure, blurred vision, etc.)
Looking outside vehicle (in rear view mirror, at traffic, at road signs, in store window, for gas station, for parking space, for business, etc.)
Looking inside vehicle (at map, papers, mail, for pen, for address on paper, down not specified)
Reaching for object (wallet, pills, inhaler, backseat)
Other (sun glare, sneezed, tired, sleepy, child playing with controls, intoxicated, depressed, etc.)

Unknown Distraction Not Specified

Inattentive/Lost in Thought



Data Source (Florida Crashes):

Beginning in 2001, a variable for coding the “Driver Distraction” was added to the Florida crash report as a contributing cause. Florida data presented in this report were obtained by trained, professional investigators that collected information at the scene of the crash, from an examination of the vehicles involved in a crash, directly from interviews with the crash victims and other witnesses, as well as an examination of the crash scene. This report presents the results of a study of the distraction data collected as part of the Florida crash database for 2003 as well as for the period 2001-2003. For the current analysis two variables were defined: one identifying the specific distracting event for those drivers identified as distracted and the second identifying the attention status of the drivers.

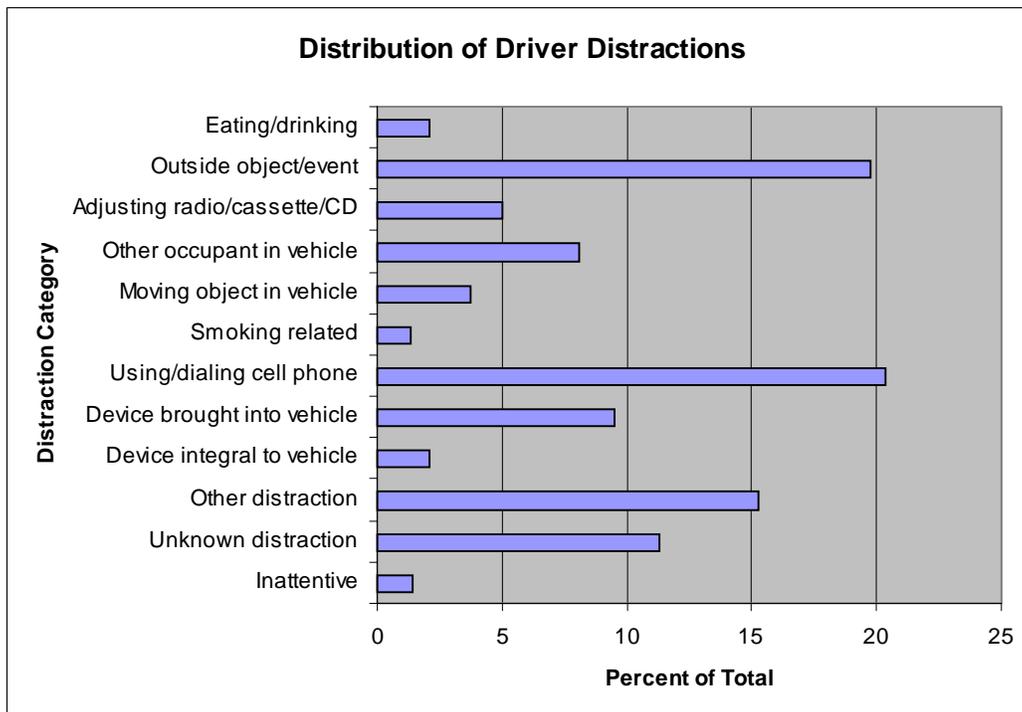
Driver Distraction Data Analysis –Florida Crashes 2003:

Driver Distractions by Number of Drivers 2003

Table 1

Driver Distraction	Number of Drivers	Percent of Total
Eating/Drinking	37	2.06
Outside Person, Object, or Event	355	19.76
Adjusting Radio/ Cassette/CD	90	5.01
Other Occupant in Vehicle	145	8.07
Moving Object in Vehicle	67	3.73
Smoking related	24	1.34
Using/Dialing Cell Phone	366	20.38
Other Device/Object Brought into Vehicle	171	9.52
Using Other Device Integral to Vehicle	38	2.12
Other Distraction	274	15.26
Unknown Distraction not Specified	203	11.30
Inattentive/Lost in Thought	26	1.45
Total	1,796	100.00

Table 1 shows that 20.38 percent of 1,796 distracted drivers were “using/dialing cell phone” at the time of a crash, the largest percentage distraction for 2003. The percent of drivers in crashes attributed to “outside person, object, or event” was the next highest at 19.76 percent, followed by “other distraction” at 15.26 percent, and then 11.30 percent for “unknown distraction not specified.” The remaining eight categories accounted for 33.30 percent, and ranged from 1.34 to 9.52 percent. The following bar chart displays the percentage distribution of driver distractions:



**Driver Distractions by Driver Age Categories
2003**

Table 2

Driver Distraction	Age						Total
	<20	20-29	30-49	50-64	65+	Unknown	
Eating/Drinking	2	11	19	4	1	0	37
Outside Person, Object, or Event	57	85	119	51	28	15	355
Adjusting Radio/ Cassette/CD	28	36	20	4	1	1	90
Other Occupant in Vehicle	19	46	57	11	6	6	145
Moving Object in Vehicle	11	13	27	10	6	0	67
Smoking related	4	7	11	1	0	1	24
Using/Dialing Cell Phone	64	100	141	42	7	12	366
Other Device/Object Brought into Vehicle	33	46	58	23	7	4	171
Using Other Device Integral to Vehicle	10	10	5	10	3	0	38
Other Distraction	36	67	95	43	26	7	274
Unknown Distraction not Specified	38	41	63	26	15	20	203
Inattentive/Lost in Thought	2	4	11	5	3	1	26
Total	304	466	626	230	103	67	1,796
% of Total	16.93	25.95	34.86	12.81	5.73	3.73	100.00
	42.88			18.54			

As shown in **Table 2**, drivers 30-49 accounted for the largest percent of distraction related crashes (34.86 percent). This is down slightly from the previous study done using 2001 crash data (37.24 percent). However, when compared to the number of licensed drivers in this age group they do not appear to be overrepresented and in fact are slightly underrepresented. When looking at the age group of persons under 30 (42.88 percent) as compared to the age group 50 and over (18.54 percent) it can be concluded that younger drivers had a significantly higher distraction rate. Also it can be seen from this table there was a higher incidence of cell phone distraction for the under 50 age group.

Table 2A shows that certain types of distractions were more prominent in certain age groups. For example, drivers under the age of 20 were more likely than other age groups to be distracted by “adjusting radio/cassette/CD” or “object brought into vehicle,” whereas persons age 30-49 had a slightly higher distraction percentage from “using/dialing cell phone.” Persons age 65 and over had a higher rate of distraction from “outside person, object, or event” or from “other distraction.”

**Distribution of Driver Distractions within Categories of Driver Age
2003**

Table 2A

Driver Distraction	Age						% of Total
	<20	20-29	30-49	50-64	65+	Unknown	
Eating/Drinking	0.66	2.36	3.04	1.74	0.97	0.00	2.06
Outside Person, Object, or Event	18.75	18.24	19.01	22.17	27.18	22.39	19.76
Adjusting Radio/ Cassette/CD	9.21	7.73	3.19	1.74	0.97	1.49	5.01
Other Occupant in Vehicle	6.25	9.87	9.11	4.78	5.83	8.96	8.07
Moving Object in Vehicle	3.62	2.79	4.31	4.35	5.83	0.00	3.73
Smoking related	1.32	1.50	1.76	0.43	0.00	1.49	1.34
Using/Dialing Cell Phone	21.05	21.46	22.52	18.26	6.80	17.91	20.38
Other Device/Object Brought into Vehicle	10.86	9.87	9.27	10.00	6.80	5.97	9.52
Using Other Device Integral to Vehicle	3.29	2.15	0.80	4.35	2.91	0.00	2.12
Other Distraction	11.84	14.38	15.18	18.70	25.24	10.45	15.26
Unknown Distraction not Specified	12.50	8.80	10.06	1.30	14.56	29.85	11.30
Inattentive/Lost in Thought	0.66	0.86	1.76	2.17	2.91	1.49	1.45
Total %	100.00						

Driver Distractions by Driver Gender

2003

Table 3

Driver Distraction	Gender			Total
	Male	Female	Unknown	
Eating/Drinking	21	16	0	37
Outside Person, Object, or Event	208	140	7	355
Adjusting Radio/ Cassette/CD	63	27	0	90
Other Occupant in Vehicle	73	70	2	145
Moving Object in Vehicle	26	41	0	67
Smoking related	16	7	1	24
Using/Dialing Cell Phone	207	152	7	366
Other Device/Object Brought into Vehicle	101	70	0	171
Using Other Device Integral to Vehicle	19	19	0	38
Other Distraction	174	97	3	274
Unknown Distraction not Specified	115	74	14	203
Inattentive/Lost in Thought	18	7	1	26
Total	1,041	720	35	1,796
% of Total	57.96	40.09	1.95	100.00

Table 3 shows that males are significantly more likely to have a crash due to a distraction than females (57.96 versus 40.09 percent). This differential is very close to that from the previous distracted driver study utilizing 2001 data (58.62 versus 39.14 percent). In comparison, the number of males and females with a Florida driver license is 7.6 and 7.3 million, respectively, or 50.9 and 49.1 percent. With regard to specific types of distractions, as depicted in **Table 3A** below, male drivers tend to be more distracted than females while “adjusting radios, cassettes, or CD players” and by “other distractions.” Females are more distracted by having “other occupant in vehicle,” “moving object in vehicle,” and “using/dialing cell phone.” The earlier distracted driver report utilizing 2001 data showed that for “using/dialing cell phone,” male and female rates were almost identical (21.89 versus 21.68 percent, respectively).

Distribution of Driver Distractions within Categories of Driver Gender

2003

Table 3A

Driver Distraction	Gender			% of Total
	Male %	Female %	Unknown %	
Eating/Drinking	2.02	2.22	0.00	2.06
Outside Person, Object, or Event	19.98	19.44	20.00	19.76
Adjusting Radio/ Cassette/CD	6.05	3.75	0.00	5.01
Other Occupant in Vehicle	7.01	9.72	5.71	8.07
Moving Object in Vehicle	2.50	5.69	0.00	3.73
Smoking related	1.54	0.97	2.86	1.34
Using/Dialing Cell Phone	19.88	21.11	20.00	20.38
Other Device/Object Brought into Vehicle	9.70	9.72	0.00	9.52
Using Other Device Integral to Vehicle	1.83	2.64	0.00	2.12
Other Distraction	16.71	13.47	8.57	15.26
Unknown Distraction not Specified	11.05	10.28	40.00	11.30
Inattentive/Lost in Thought	1.73	0.97	2.86	1.45
Total %	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

**Driver Distractions by Type of Road
2003**

Table 4

Driver Distraction	Type of Road								Total
	Interstate	U.S.	State	County	Local	Turnpike/ Toll	Private	All Other	
Eating/Drinking	1	5	13	7	9	1	0	1	37
Outside Person, Object, or Event	24	18	89	77	108	6	12	21	355
Adjusting Radio/ Cassette/CD	6	4	21	26	30	2	0	1	90
Other Occupant in Vehicle	9	8	38	37	40	3	2	8	145
Moving Object in Vehicle	5	6	11	17	22	2	4	0	67
Smoking related	2	1	7	5	9	0	0	0	24
Using/Dialing Cell Phone	19	29	118	78	99	10	6	7	366
Device/Object Brought into Vehicle	2	16	50	34	60	8	0	1	171
Device Integral to Vehicle	2	2	11	6	15	1	1	0	38
Other Distraction	13	36	79	60	71	4	2	9	274
Unknown Distraction not Specified	11	16	65	31	60	0	7	13	203
Inattentive/Lost in Thought	0	4	3	10	9	0	0	0	26
Total	94	145	505	388	532	37	34	61	1,796
% of Total	5.23	8.07	28.12	21.60	29.62	2.06	1.89	3.40	100.00
			79.34						

Table 4 shows a relatively large distraction percentage total for state, county, and local roads (79.34 percent). However, when the number of road miles for these road types are taken into account, these percentages are fairly proportionate to the road mileages. **Table 4A** presents the percentage distribution of driver distractions within each type of road. As can be seen from this chart, there is considerable variability in percentages across road types. For example, on Interstates, local, private, and all other road types, “outside person, object, or event” represented the largest distraction percentage; on state, county, and turnpike/toll roads, “using/dialing cell phone” accounted for the largest distraction percentage; and on U.S. roads, the largest distraction was “other distraction.”

**Distribution of Driver Distractions within Categories of Road Types
2003**

Table 4A

Driver Distraction	Type of Road								% of Total
	Interstate	U.S.	State	County	Local	Turnpike/ Toll	Private	All Other	
Eating/Drinking	1.06	3.45	2.57	1.80	1.69	2.70	0.00	1.64	2.06
Outside Person, Object, or Event	25.53	12.41	17.62	19.85	20.30	16.22	35.29	34.43	19.76
Adjusting Radio/ Cassette/CD	6.38	2.76	4.16	6.70	5.64	5.41	0.00	1.64	5.01
Other Occupant in Vehicle	9.57	5.52	7.52	9.54	7.52	8.11	5.88	13.11	8.07
Moving Object in Vehicle	5.32	4.14	2.18	4.38	4.14	5.41	11.76	0.00	3.73
Smoking related	2.13	0.69	1.39	1.29	1.69	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.34
Using/Dialing Cell Phone	20.21	20.00	23.37	20.10	18.61	27.03	17.65	11.48	20.38
Device Brought into Vehicle	2.13	11.03	9.90	8.76	11.28	21.62	0.00	1.64	9.52
Device Integral to Vehicle	2.13	1.38	2.18	1.55	2.82	2.70	2.94	0.00	2.12
Other Distraction	13.83	24.83	15.64	15.46	13.35	10.81	5.88	14.75	15.26
Unknown Distraction	11.70	11.03	12.87	7.99	11.28	0.00	20.59	21.31	11.30
Inattentive/Lost in Thought	0.00	2.76	0.59	2.58	1.69	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.45
Total %	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Driver Distractions by Time of Day

2003

Table 5

Driver Distraction	Time of Day			Total
	6:00AM-5:59PM (Daylight)	6:00PM-5:59AM (Non-Daylight)	Unknown	
Eating/Drinking	28	9	0	37
Outside Person, Object, or Event	242	111	2	355
Adjusting Radio/ Cassette/CD	50	40	0	90
Other Occupant in Vehicle	96	49	0	145
Moving Object in Vehicle	52	15	0	67
Smoking related	15	8	1	24
Using/Dialing Cell Phone	214	151	1	366
Other Device/Object Brought into Vehicle	114	57	0	171
Using Other Device Integral to Vehicle	28	10	0	38
Other Distraction	184	89	1	274
Unknown Distraction not Specified	139	63	1	203
Inattentive/Lost in Thought	18	8	0	26
Total	1,180	610	6	1,796
% of Total	65.70	33.96	.34	100.00

Table 5 shows that approximately 66 percent of all crashes resulting from driver distraction occurred during daylight hours (6:00AM-5:59PM), with 34 percent occurring during non-daylight hours (6:00PM-5:59AM). These percentages are virtually identical to those that were found to occur in the previous study utilizing 2001 data. **Table 5A** presents the percentage distribution of driver distractions by daylight and non-daylight hours. Of the total distraction crashes that occurred during daylight hours, approximately 21 percent were attributed to “outside person, object, or event” followed next in order by 18 percent attributed to “using/dialing cell phone.” During the non-daylight hours, this order was reversed, with approximately 25 percent attributed to “using/dialing cell phone” and 18 percent due to “outside person, object, or event.”

Distribution of Driver Distractions by Time of Day

2003

Table 5A

Driver Distraction	Time of Day			% of Total
	6:00AM-5:59PM (Daylight)	6:00PM-5:59AM (Non-Daylight)	Unknown	
Eating/Drinking	2.37	1.48	0.00	2.06
Outside Person, Object, or Event	20.51	18.20	33.33	19.76
Adjusting Radio/ Cassette/CD	4.24	6.56	0.00	5.01
Other Occupant in Vehicle	8.14	8.03	0.00	8.07
Moving Object in Vehicle	4.41	2.46	0.00	3.73
Smoking related	1.27	1.31	16.67	1.34
Using/Dialing Cell Phone	18.14	24.75	16.67	20.38
Other Device/Object Brought into Vehicle	9.66	9.34	0.00	9.52
Using Other Device Integral to Vehicle	2.37	1.64	0.00	2.12
Other Distraction	15.59	14.59	16.67	15.26
Unknown Distraction not Specified	11.78	10.33	16.67	11.30
Inattentive/Lost in Thought	1.53	1.31	0.00	1.45
Total %	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Driver Distractions by Injury Severity

2003

Table 6

Driver Distraction	Crash Injury Severity						Total
	No Injury	Possible Injury	Non-Incapacitating Injury	Incapacitating Injury	Fatal	Unknown	
Eating/Drinking	9	17	8	3	0	0	37
Outside Person, Object, or Event	106	113	99	32	2	3	355
Adjusting Radio/ Cassette/CD	27	26	26	10	1	0	90
Other Occupant in Vehicle	35	40	50	18	1	1	145
Moving Object in Vehicle	14	21	24	7	1	0	67
Smoking related	9	8	5	1	1	0	24
Using/Dialing Cell Phone	92	112	114	44	3	1	366
Device/Object Brought into Vehicle	40	54	47	30	0	0	171
Device Integral to Vehicle	8	15	10	4	1	0	38
Other Distraction	64	93	77	33	4	3	274
Unknown Distraction not Specified	67	52	52	22	5	5	203
Inattentive/Lost in Thought	5	11	8	1	1	0	26
Total	476	562	520	205	20	13	1,796
% of Total	26.50	31.29	28.95	11.41	1.11	0.72	100.00
		72.76					

Table 6 shows that approximately 73 percent of distracted drivers involved in crashes received a variety of injuries including fatal injuries, with 27 percent receiving no injuries. Of the drivers injured, almost 13 percent were incapacitating or fatal injuries. In **Table 6A** it can be seen that injuries from the distraction categories “outside person, object, or event” and “using/dialing cell phone” attributed to large percentages of possible, non-incapacitating, and incapacitating injuries. For fatal injuries, “other distraction” and “unknown distraction not specified” made up the largest single percentage distractions.

Distribution of Driver Distractions by Categories of Injury Severity

2003

Table 6A

Driver Distraction	Crash Injury Severity						% Of Total
	No Injury	Possible Injury	Non-Incapacitating Injury	Incapacitating Injury	Fatal	Unknown	
Eating/Drinking	1.89	3.02	1.54	1.46	0.00	0.00	2.06
Outside Person, Object, or Event	22.27	20.11	19.04	15.61	10.00	23.08	19.76
Adjusting Radio/ Cassette/CD	5.67	4.63	5.00	4.88	5.00	0.00	5.01
Other Occupant in Vehicle	7.35	7.12	9.62	8.78	5.00	7.69	8.07
Moving Object in Vehicle	2.94	3.74	4.62	3.41	5.00	0.00	3.73
Smoking related	1.89	1.42	0.96	0.49	5.00	0.00	1.34
Using/Dialing Cell Phone	19.33	19.93	21.92	21.46	15.00	7.69	20.38
Device/Object Brought into Vehicle	8.40	9.61	9.04	14.63	0.00	0.00	9.52
Device Integral to Vehicle	1.68	2.67	1.92	1.95	5.00	0.00	2.12
Other Distraction	13.45	16.55	14.81	16.10	20.00	23.08	15.26
Unknown Distraction not Specified	14.08	9.25	10.00	10.73	25.00	38.46	11.30
Inattentive/Lost in Thought	1.05	1.96	1.54	0.49	5.00	0.00	1.45
Total %	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Driver Distractions by Speed

2003

Table 7

Driver Distraction	Speed at Time of Crash			Total
	<= 45 MPH	> 45 MPH	Unknown	
Eating/Drinking	23	9	5	37
Outside Person, Object, or Event	268	53	34	355
Adjusting Radio/ Cassette/CD	60	23	7	90
Other Occupant in Vehicle	108	25	12	145
Moving Object in Vehicle	46	14	7	67
Smoking related	16	4	4	24
Using/Dialing Cell Phone	271	63	32	366
Other Device/Object Brought into Vehicle	135	28	8	171
Using Other Device Integral to Vehicle	28	5	5	38
Other Distraction	208	42	24	274
Unknown Distraction not Specified	149	31	23	203
Inattentive/Lost in Thought	23	1	2	26
Total	1,335	298	163	1,796
% of Total	74.33	16.59	9.08	100.00

Table 7 shows that approximately 74 percent of distracted drivers had a speed of 45 mph or less at the time of the crash, and 17 percent had a speed of greater than 45 mph. When distributions of distractions within categories of speed are reviewed (**Table 7A**), the distractions percentages are evenly divided, with 50 percent higher at 45 mph or less and 50 percent higher at speeds of greater than 45 mph.

Distribution of Driver Distractions within Categories of Speed

2003

Table 7A

Driver Distraction	Speed at Time of Crash			% of Total
	<= 45 MPH	> 45 MPH	Unknown	
Eating/Drinking	1.72	3.02	3.07	2.06
Outside Person, Object, or Event	20.07	17.79	20.86	19.76
Adjusting Radio/ Cassette/CD	4.49	7.72	4.29	5.01
Other Occupant in Vehicle	8.09	8.39	7.36	8.07
Moving Object in Vehicle	3.45	4.70	4.29	3.73
Smoking related	1.20	1.34	2.45	1.34
Using/Dialing Cell Phone	20.30	21.14	19.63	20.38
Other Device/Object Brought into Vehicle	10.11	9.40	4.91	9.52
Using Other Device Integral to Vehicle	2.10	1.68	3.07	2.12
Other Distraction	15.58	14.09	14.72	15.26
Unknown Distraction not Specified	11.16	10.40	14.11	11.30
Inattentive/Lost in Thought	1.72	0.34	1.23	1.45
Total %	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Driver Distraction Data Analysis – Florida Crashes 2001-2003:

Driver Distractions by Number of Drivers - Florida 2001 – 2003

Table 8

Driver Distraction	2001		2002		2003	
	Number of Drivers	Percent of Total	Number of Drivers	Percent of Total	Number of Drivers	Percent of Total
Eating/Drinking	28	1.84	64	3.08	37	2.06
Outside Person, Object, or Event	145	9.54	353	17.00	355	19.76
Adjusting Radio/ Cassette/CD	95	6.25	127	6.12	90	5.01
Other Occupant in Vehicle	114	7.50	163	7.85	145	8.07
Moving Object in Vehicle	50	3.29	54	2.60	67	3.73
Smoking related	35	2.30	37	1.78	24	1.34
Using/Dialing Cell Phone	335	22.04	416	20.04	366	20.38
Other Device/Object Brought into Vehicle	78	5.13	163	7.85	171	9.52
Using Other Device Integral to Vehicle	29	1.91	46	2.22	38	2.12
Other Distraction	273	17.96	308	14.84	274	15.26
Unknown Distraction not Specified	321	21.12	319	15.37	203	11.30
Inattentive/Lost in Thought	17	1.12	26	1.25	26	1.45
Total	1,520	100.00	2,076	100.00	1,796	100.00

Table 8 presents a comparison of driver distractions for the three year period of 2001 through 2003. For the three year period, this table shows that the percent of total distractions increased substantially for the two categories “outside person, object, or event” and “other device/object brought into vehicle.” An annual increase, albeit less pronounced, is also noted for the category “inattentive/lost in thought.” With regard to decreases, the category “unknown distraction not specified” decreased dramatically as did the “smoking related” distraction. The largest percentage distraction “using/dialing cell phone” remained relatively constant over the three year period, as did the remainder of the distraction categories.



Driver Distractions – Florida vs. U.S. and Other States:

Driver Distractions - Florida vs. U.S. and Pennsylvania

Table 9

Driver Distraction	Percent of Total		
	Florida (2003)	U.S. (1995-1999)*	Pennsylvania (1999-2000)*
Eating/Drinking	2.1	1.7	5.2
Outside Person, Object, or Event	19.8	29.4	21.8
Adjusting Radio/ Cassette/CD	5.0	11.4	10.2
Other Occupant in Vehicle	8.1	10.9	10.2
Moving Object in Vehicle	3.7	4.3	8.2
Smoking related	1.3	0.9	4.7
Using/Dialing Cell Phone	20.4	1.5	5.2
Other Device/Object Brought into Vehicle	9.5	2.9	5.7
Using Other Device Integral to Vehicle	2.1	2.8	5.2
Other Distraction	15.3	25.6	21.6
Unknown Distraction not Specified	11.3	8.6	2.0
Inattentive/Lost in Thought	1.4	0.0	0.0
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 9 provides a comparison between Florida, U.S., and Pennsylvania distraction data:

- As mentioned earlier in this report, Florida crash data identifies less than 1 percent of crashes in 2003 as being caused by distracted drivers and is collected from data obtained by trained, professional investigators that collected information at the scene of the crash, from an examination of the vehicles involved in a crash, directly from interviews with the crash victims and other witnesses, as well as an examination of the crash scene
- United States crash data from 1995 through 1999 identified 8.3% of drivers that were considered distracted in traffic crashes. This data is a compilation of 5 years of national Crashworthiness Data System (CDS) data. The CDS is a part of the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration's (NHTSA) National Automotive Sampling System, which is based on a national probability sample of approximately 5,000 police-reported traffic crashes.
- Pennsylvania Data for 1999 and 2000 identified 3.5% of drivers that were considered distracted in traffic crashes. This data is the result of a study by the Joint State Government Commission of the Pennsylvania General Assembly (2001). Pennsylvania was utilized in this report due it being the only state determined to have comparable data available.

* The reporting periods for both the U.S. and Pennsylvania data are the most current available.

The majority of the distraction category percentages are fairly close between the three entities with a few exceptions, the most obvious being “using/dialing cell phone” of which Florida is much higher and “adjusting radio/cassette/CD,” of which Florida is substantially lower than both the U.S. and Pennsylvania. However, the cell phone exception may be due in part by the difference in reporting periods, which for Florida would include the relatively recent increase in the number of cell phones. Two other notable exceptions are “outside person, object, or event,” of which the U.S. is higher and “unknown distraction not specified,” of which Pennsylvania is substantially lower.

Although the Florida distracted driver categories match exactly with those of the U.S. and Pennsylvania (albeit different time periods), to make a comparison with other states such as Ohio, New York, and Virginia, for which only very disaggregated data was available, would be difficult at best. The future comparison of distracted driver data with other states will continue to remain difficult until states begin to provide comparable distracted driver category data.



Guide to Avoid Driver Distractions:

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety has created the pamphlet *Pay Attention!*, which covers the obvious as well as not so obvious distractions that can cause a crash. Following suggestions and using caution can help all drivers manage the multitude of distractions they encounter on the road. In order to reduce distractions, the following actions are recommended to be followed:

- Adjust seat positions, climate controls, sound systems, and other devices before leaving or when the vehicle is stopped. Know how the controls work if something must be adjusted while driving.
- Stop to eat and drink. If that isn't possible, avoid messy foods like hamburgers and tacos.
- Pull over to a safe place to make or take a call. Better yet, turn the phone off before driving so as to not be tempted to answer calls on the road.
- When speaking on the phone or to a passenger, don't get wrapped up in emotional, intense, or complicated matters.
- Read maps and check traffic conditions before leaving. If possible, use a passenger as navigator and assistant.
- Don't multitask and drive, e.g., grooming, reading, or writing.
- Pull over to care for children.
- Help teenagers identify and reduce distractions.



Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles
Office of Management Research and Development
Neil Kirkman Building
2900 Apalachee Parkway
Tallahassee, FL 32399 - 0500

