

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Texas Driver Mobile Communication Device Use Survey

Background

Texas is one of only four states without a universal texting ban for drivers [1]. As of this writing, there are approximately 40 cities and towns in Texas that have some form of local ban on mobile communication device (MCD) use while driving. Statewide, however, cell phone use is currently banned for teens driving under Graduated Driver License restrictions, school bus drivers, and drivers in school zone areas. This survey addresses distracted driving by measuring and identifying the problem and tracking changes in the use of MCD's by Texas drivers over time.

What the Researchers Did

The researchers conducted an observational survey of MCD use modeled after the electronic device use component in the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS). Surveyors looked for drivers holding a phone to their ear, speaking with a visible headset on, or manipulating a hand-held device while driving. The sample included 190 intersections located in 22 counties. Data was recorded at each site for one hour, between 7am and 6pm on weekdays and weekends.

What They Found

The researchers observed 31,956 vehicles during the 2015 survey period with 2,546 drivers recorded as using an MCD in one or more ways. When calculated using the weights and sampling probabilities, this produced an estimated MCD use rate of **8.0%** statewide. Overall MCD use has declined in the three years the survey has been conducted, as shown in the table below. Talking on the phone and use of other devices such as I-pads, tablets, or GPS devices decreased in 2015. However, texting rates remained about the same.

Statewide MCD Use

Year	MCD Use Rate	Cell Phone	Texting	Other Devices
2013	10.2%	6.7%	3.6%	0.2%
2014	9.0%	5.9%	3.7%	0.5%
2015	8.0%	5.0%	3.5%	.04%

What This Means

This observational survey recorded MCD use throughout Texas to arrive at a probability-based estimate of statewide MCD use. The 8% MCD use rate means that during daylight hours on Texas roads approximately 1 in 12 vehicles is operated by a driver using an MCD at some point in their trip.

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1. Governors Highway Safety Association. http://www.ghsa.org/html/stateinfo/laws/cellphone_laws.html