



# Nationwide

10 May 2022

## The everyday device that is putting your life (and others) at risk

Michelle May of the Ohio Department of Transportation is noticing a trend on America's roadways... and it has her concerned.

"I think people are becoming more comfortable driving with minicomputers in the palm of their hands and they underestimate the danger of doing so," said May, program manager at the Ohio Department of Transportation.

The statistics confirm what May is referencing – cell phone use is leading to increased distracted driving across America.

According to recent data released by Nationwide:

- Drivers are **distracted by their phones up to 9 times during a typical 20-mile commute**, data from Nationwide's SmartRide mobile app shows
- **Two-thirds of drivers (66%) say that holding a cell phone to talk, text or use an app while driving is dangerous, yet half (51%) admitted to doing this in the past six months**, according to findings from a [Nationwide survey](#)

These data points should make everyone think twice when it comes to grabbing a cell phone while behind the wheel of a vehicle.

"These behaviors create a dangerous environment for everyone when we don't give our full attention on the activity of driving, said Beth Riczko, Personal Lines President at Nationwide. "Unfortunately, we are seeing an increased use of cell phones while driving, across every demographic. Nationwide's mission is to protect people, and it's important that we raise awareness of this issue."

Nationwide used Distracted Driving Awareness Month as a platform to share the stats to encourage drivers to put their phones down while behind the wheel. When a driver chooses to look at their phone, they are impacting every single person on the roadway.

"These devices are distracting forces in the vehicle. And if drivers don't utilize their phone's hands-free technology, things won't get better – they will get worse," added Riczko.

Another important issue is that our laws have not kept up with this technology. For this reason, Nationwide and consumer advocacy groups have renewed their call for all 50 states to adopt hands-free primary enforcement laws. This will enable law enforcement to ticket motor vehicle operators who are using handheld mobile devices behind the wheel. States that have enacted this type of legislation have experienced a decrease in auto crash related fatalities. A recent Nationwide survey showed most Americans want these types of laws on the books.

- 88% of consumers say they support legislation to address distracted driving
- 86% support legislation in their state that would prohibit drivers from holding their phones while driving to talk, text or for other purposes

In late 2020, Nationwide introduced an experience that provides customized feedback on phone distractions and it's helping to reduce distractions on our roadways. Through the SmartRide mobile program, there has been nearly a 10 percent reduction in everyday hand-held distraction among these drivers. Providing feedback on phone use while behind the wheel increases driver's awareness on the

frequency of this behavior and reduces distracted driving crashes.

To learn more about [SmartRide's phone distraction feature](#), talk to your independent insurance agent.

<https://news.nationwide.com/en-us/distracted-driving-putting-lives-at-risk/>