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Distracted Driving on
the Capital Beltway

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Distracted Driving on the Capital Beltway

Approximately, 210,000 vehicles travel the Capital Beltway (I-495) in Virginia each day.

Unfortunately, more than half are doing so without their focus on the road.

This report, based on a survey of 1,047 Capital Beltway drivers who drive in the HOT Lanes construction zone, examines distracted driving habits in this area, where construction compounds the dangers of distracted driving.



56% of Beltway Drivers Are Distracted

- ▶ Distracted driving is a widespread problem on the Capital Beltway

56%

Of respondents use their cell phone to call or read/write text messages while driving, or roughly **117,600** Beltway drivers daily

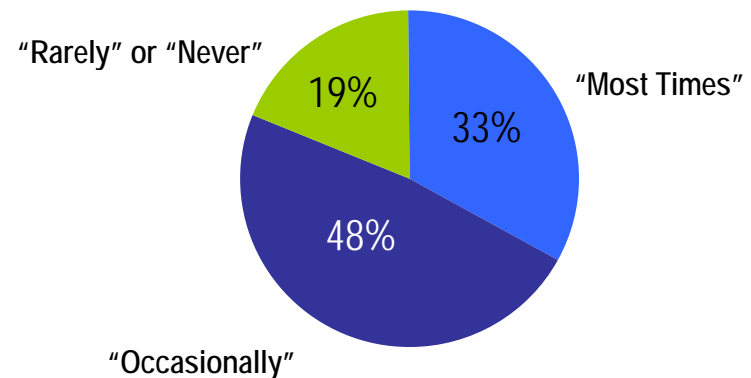
These behaviors are not infrequent. One-third admit to using their cell phones "most times."

Among the cell phone drivers who report using their cell phones at least "occasionally," one-in-five say it is "usually" for work-related items.

25%

Of respondents note they either read or write texts while driving, or roughly **50,000** Beltway drivers daily

How often do you use your cell phone while driving?



Distracted Beltway Drivers Are Dangerous

- ▶ Cell phone use doubles the odds of a crash or incident

Fewer than one-in-five (18%) Beltway travelers say that they have had an accident or near miss as a result of being distracted while driving.



2x

But...

A driver using a cell phone is **2x as likely** to have had an accident or near miss than the non-user. (*24% to 11%*)

Texting Beltway Drivers Are Very Dangerous

- ▶ Of the four vehicles directly next to yours, one is likely driven by a texting driver and is dramatically more likely to be involved in a crash

Have you had an accident or near miss as a result of these activities?

Those who read texts

39% Yes

Those who write texts

50% Yes



Drivers reading texts are nearly twice as likely to have had an accident or near miss than those using cell phones for calling.

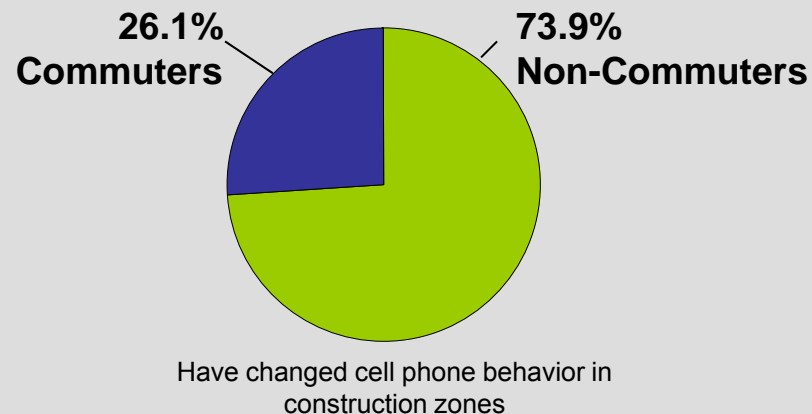
Those who read or write a text while driving are more than three times as likely to have been in a near miss or accident than other drivers on the Capital Beltway.

No Room For Error In Construction Zones

- ▶ A busy construction area should change everything, but doesn't
 - Nearly half (46%) of cell phone drivers have made **no change** to their cell phone behavior while driving in the Capital Beltway construction zone
 - Just 16% say they make a conscious effort **not to** read/write texts or e-mails in the construction zone

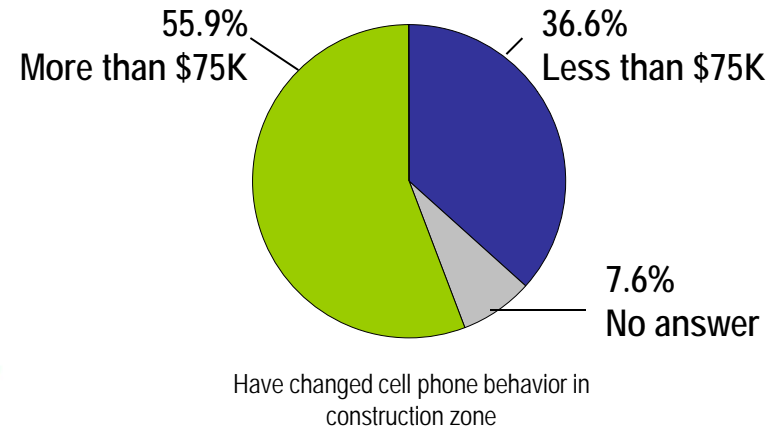
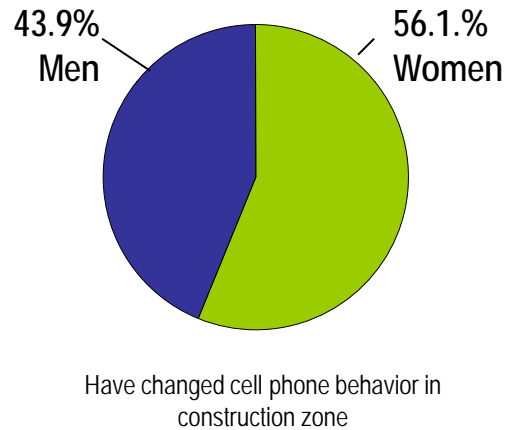


Those who have changed behavior in construction zones are not those on the road the most:



Changing Habits: Who Leads?

- ▶ Women and individuals with incomes more than \$75K are most likely to be among the few who have altered cell phone behavior in the Capital Beltway construction zone



Awareness Makes a Difference.

Can't recall seeing or hearing a story on distracted driving **26.1%**

Can recall seeing or hearing a story on distracted driving **73.9%**

Cell Phone Law Awareness Gap

- ▶ Beltway drivers are not aware of laws pertaining to cell phone use

Many Beltway drivers either:



Think there are no Virginia laws pertaining to cell phones (17%)



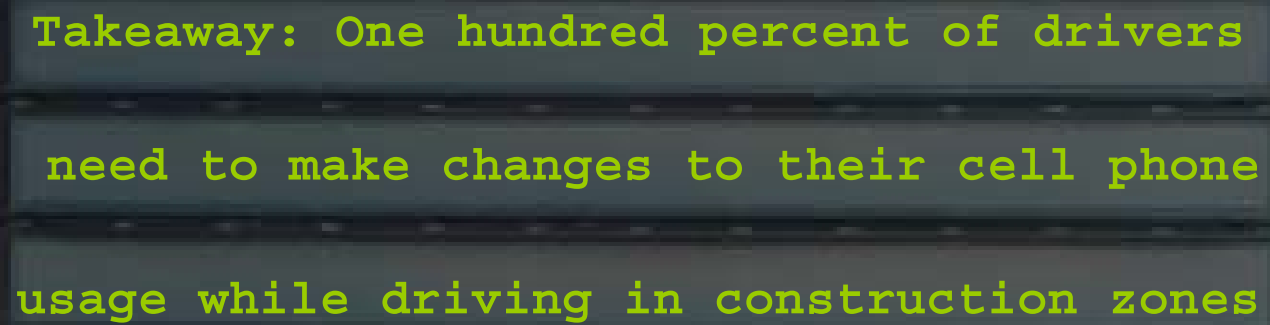
Don't know of any Virginia laws pertaining to cell phones (37%)

In reality, the Commonwealth of Virginia:*

Bans text messaging for all drivers

Bans all cell phone use for school bus drivers

Bans all cell phone use for drivers under 18 years of age



Takeaway: One hundred percent of drivers
need to make changes to their cell phone
usage while driving in construction zones

Taking Work (on the Ride) Home

- ▶ Many distracted drivers are addressing work-related issues

When using a cell phone or Blackberry while driving your car, how often are you responding to a work-related issue?

49%

say Usually/Occasionally

vs.

51%

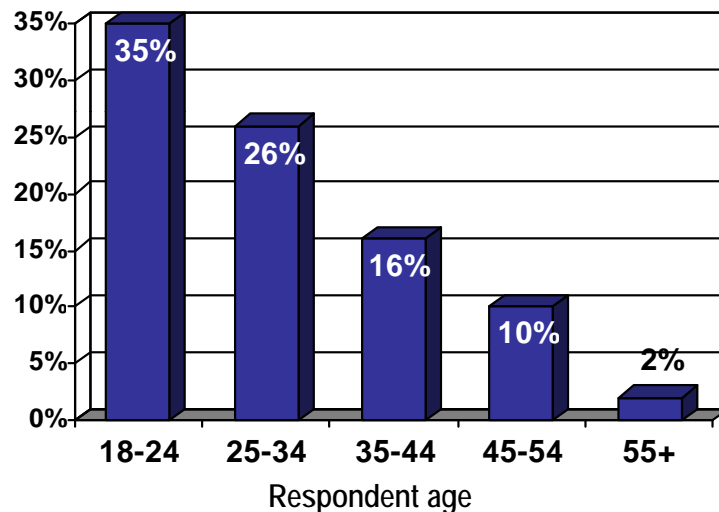
say Rarely/Never



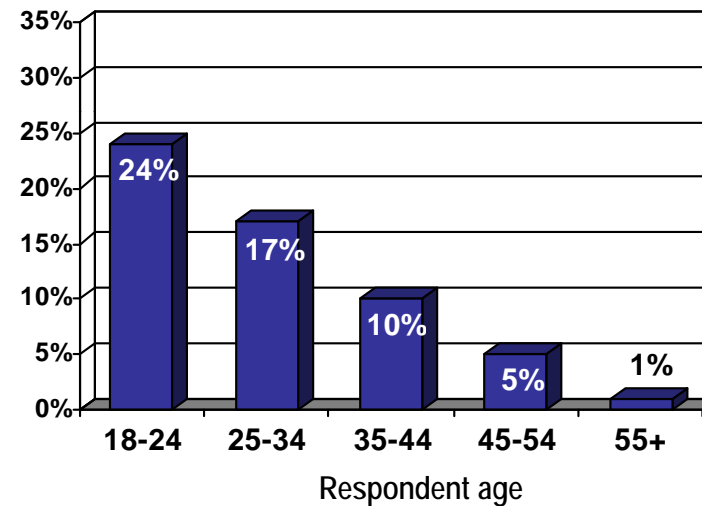
Young and Distracted

- ▶ Distracted drivers are disproportionately young (inexperienced) drivers

Percent who read texts while driving



Percent who write texts while driving

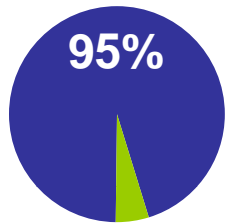


Why is this a problem?

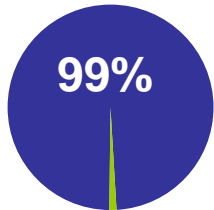
- #1 More than one-in-four (26%) of those who say they write texts while driving say they have had an accident or nearly missed having an accident as a result
- #2 Young drivers are already at a disadvantage. Based on 2005 Census data, there were 26.1 fatalities for drivers aged 21-25 per 100,000 population, compared to 14.4 fatalities per 100,000 population for drivers aged 46-50 (almost double)*

We All Know Better

- ▶ Drivers are aware their behavior is dangerous



Ninety-five percent of respondents believe that reading a text while driving qualifies as distracted driving



Ninety-nine percent of respondents believe that drivers reading or writing a text presents a threat to other drivers



What defines distracted driving? Three-in-four (73%) Beltway travelers specifically identify "texting"

Texting

Texting

Texting

Other

Methodology

Methodology

Online survey executed September 4-8, 2009, of 1,047 greater Washington, D.C.-area residents who indicated they drive on the Virginia side of the Capital Beltway with some frequency each month.

Sample Demographics

The sample was created using an outbound balanced design accurately reflecting all adults in the Greater Washington, DC-area based on U.S. Census figures.

Thank You

For More Information:

www.virginiahotlanes.com

Michelle Holland

(571) 527-2068

mholland@transurban.com

