

## Teen Text Mess

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Statistics are starting to stack up, indicating a move in gender equality that no one should be glad to hear. Young female drivers are now just as dangerous behind the wheel as their male counterparts. The reason? Cell phones and its most popular teen use.....texting.

Just in case you're not familiar with texting, the term refers to messages that are sent via a cell phone keyboard. The messages tend to be very short, making use of abbreviations and codes and are very interactive; typically requiring a high level of back and forth responses.

Among the differences between men and women is the fact that the latter are far more social and communicative. Young females have taken their love of communication and embraced the fact that it is teamed up with mobility. No matter the time or place, one can be in constant contact with friends; even when driving.

The problem is obvious, yet teens are largely oblivious. Texting requires use of hands and eyes to send and receive.....those are two elements that are also fairly important to operating a vehicle. Increasingly, the attention given over to texting is resulting in a spike in accidents; both minor and serious.

In a '07 study performed by Liberty Mutual Ins. and Students Against Drunk Driving (SADD), it was found that nearly half of teen drivers admitted to texting while driving. SADD suggests that parents try to control the issue by making clear that it's unacceptable to use cell phones, especially texting, while driving. It is also important to clearly tell teens of a significant punishment for noncompliance and enforcing the rule. Just as important, parents should model the desired behavior. In other words, don't use cell phones or text in a vehicle.

Texting is a nightmare when paired with driving....make sure you do your best to minimize this serious problem.

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