

# SAFETY TALK



NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

• UPPER GREAT PLAINS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE

• NORTH DAKOTA LOCAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

## DISTRACTED DRIVING

Do you use your phone, electronic devices, eat, drink, read, take photos, get into an enthusiastic conversation with your passengers, or put on make-up while driving? If you answered yes to any of these items, you are distracted and that could equal a driving violation resulting in steep fines and points on your license.



Image courtesy of: drivesafely®

Distracted driving is ANY activity that diverts a driver's attention away from the primary task of driving. We worry about doing so many other things that we shift our responsibilities away from behind the wheel and try to multi-task. In 2015, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reported nearly 3,500 people killed and 391,000 injured in crashes involving distracted drivers. There are three main types of distractions, all of which cause us to become distracted:

1. **Manual:** taking your hands off the wheel
2. **Visual:** taking your eyes off the road
3. **Cognitive:** taking your mind off driving

Because texting requires visual, manual and cognitive attention from the driver, it is by far the most dangerous distraction.

The August 1, 2017, changes to the law in North Dakota simply state that **"distracted driving"** is any activity that impairs a driver's ability to operate a vehicle. Fines have been increased to \$100 (even worse for minors under the age of 18). For more information, see North Dakota Century Code 39-08-23 (<http://www.legis.nd.gov/cencode/t39c08.pdf#nameddest=39-08-23>). If you are a driver, respect your passengers and fellow drivers. If you are a passenger, speak up. Together, we can reduce distracted driving and all get home safely.