

Drivers texting more often since California made it illegal

Written by Australian Business

September 20, 2013 /**24-7PressRelease**/ -- California has been on the forefront of passing laws to reduce distracted driving. Sending text messages while driving has been illegal in California since 2009, and using hand-held cell phones while driving has been illegal since 2008. However, laws have not been able to change drivers' behavior. The AAA of California's most recent annual roadside observational survey released in August 2013 showed that texting while driving has increased since the practice was outlawed.

Survey data shows texting on the rise

The survey showed that some distracted driving laws have seemed to be effective. Particularly, the use of hand-held [cell phones while driving](#) has decreased by 57 percent since the law banning it took effect in 2008.

However, the survey also showed that the incidents of drivers text messaging behind the wheel has increased by 126 percent since texting while driving became illegal in 2009. AAA reported that about 1.5 percent of drivers sent text messages or emails while driving in 2009. This number increased to 4 percent of drivers in 2012.

Representatives from the AAA note that sending text messages has become a much more prevalent form of communication in the past five years. The skyrocketing occurrence of text messages not only explains the increase in the number of drivers who texting while driving, but also the decline in those who use hand-held cell phones while driving. People make phone calls less frequently, relying on text messages to communicate instead.

Difficulties enforcing the law

The law banning texting and driving may have been designed to make the roads safer and reduce [auto accidents](#), however, the effectiveness of the law is mixed to say the least. California police have reported problems in enforcing the ban on texting and driving. It is still legal to answer a phone, search contact lists, and search for music on a phone or dial a phone number. Many police officers cannot tell the difference between a driver who is dialing the phone and one who is sending a text message. Often times, drivers claim they were merely holding their phones, not texting, and police officers cannot assert with certainty that the drivers are lying.

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Talk to a lawyer

Sending text messages while driving is negligent and dangerous behavior. Drivers who choose to violate the law by sending text messages or emails while driving face serious liability issues if they become involved in accidents. Those who are injured in auto accidents caused by distracted drivers may choose to bring suit against the distracted drivers. If you have been injured by a distracted driver, speak with an experienced car accident attorney who can help you recover for your losses.

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