

Teens less likely to text and drive with passengers on board

4/22/2013 3:57:51 PM

EXTRACT

A new study indicates that depending on whether another person is in the vehicle, teenagers frequently use their cellphones behind the wheel, even though they understand the risks associated with the activity.

ARTICLE CONTENT

A new study indicates that depending on whether another person is in the vehicle, teenagers frequently use their cellphones behind the wheel, even though they understand the risks associated with the activity.

According to a recent survey conducted by the U.S.-based tire company Bridgestone, approximately one-third of all teenagers say that they have texted or read an email message while driving when a passenger has been there. However, when young motorists are alone, 95 percent of teens confess to texting and driving.

Angela Patterson, manager of Bridgestone, indicated that these results are mixed, depending on how one looks at them. On the one hand, teens appear to be resigned to the fact that handheld phone use is socially unacceptable, as illustrated by the infrequency with which they text and drive when someone's watching them.

That said, teens are still doing it when they're on their own.

"With this many teens admitting to engaging in the behavior privately, there is still much work to be done," said Patterson. "We have to continue to reinforce that it's not okay to drive distracted alone or with others. It only takes one time to cause a crash that can injure yourself or someone else."

There also appears to be a range in which teens consider something to be more dangerous to do behind the wheel than others. For example, the poll found that when comparing texting while driving with other distractions - such as eating or adjusting the radio volume - teens were more likely to cite handheld phone use as a bigger risk to safety.

Four things to always have in the car

Experts say that it's important for parents to have a conversation with their kids about distracted driving and to not assume that they don't do it. It may be advisable to have them keep their phones turned off when they drive or alternatively keep their phones at home if they are taking a short trip.

There are some items, though, that no matter how long or short a ride may be should always be in the car. Wheels.ca automotive expert Eric Lai explained what some of these must-haves are.

One of them is a flashlight. While the dome lights may enable motorists to see what's in the interior of their car, a flat tire or some other issue will be hard to diagnose without the

proper lighting. Lai recommends bringing a flashlight that can be stored in the glove compartment.

Another item to have on hand is a set of booster cables. If the engine doesn't start, jumpers can help give the battery the juice it needs to get going, provided a motorist is nearby who's willing to offer assistance.

A first-aid kit should also be in the car, Lai advises. It doesn't have to be comprehensive, but a basic kit should have bandages, gauze, medical tape and some disinfecting ointment so that a cut can be cleaned before it's dressed.

Additionally, don't forget to have the vehicle's rural insurance policy available. Keeping it stored in the glove compartment will give motorists the information they need should they be involved in an accident. They can then exchange details about their policy with another motorist to go about the claims process.

CATEGORIES

News, Resources

