

Distracted driving is an issue that I have experienced many times firsthand. There are several friends that I will avoid riding with due to their tendency to drive distracted. I absolutely believe that apps like Snapchat have contributed to the rise. Many of my friends will send me snaps of themselves driving. The other huge contributor is texting. People are far too willing to throw away their safety, and the safety of others, in order to reply to a text. There are several things that should be done in order to cut down on distracted driving.

One of the more obvious would be to have these apps have a popup that says to make sure not to drive distracted when they sense that you are traveling in a car using the location services of the phone. If not through the apps, the phones themselves could give this warning. The only issue with this is that it would have a hard time distinguishing between those that are driving and those that are passengers. Apple iPhones now have a mode that can be turned on that essentially puts the phone on 'do not disturb' mode if it senses you are driving. Advertising this more and pushing its use could go a long way to cut down distracted driving. Any way that we can improve the phone's ability to detect and react to the driving that is taking place would be beneficial.

Another thing that needs to be done is to enhance the laws surrounding distracted driving. These tend to be a state-by-state issue, when it needs to be regulated on a federal level. Expensive tickets for distracted driving would definitely decrease the rate of it occurring. There is not much incentive to not drive distracted in many states, and that needs to be changed. This is not just an individual safety problem. Distracted driving puts the lives of everyone on the road in danger. Treating it more like a DUI, while not as harshly, would make people less likely to do it. In both scenarios, people are endangering the lives of others for selfish reasons.

To further tackle the issue, there needs to be more education about the results of distracted driving when going through driver's education. Currently, there is a large focus on drunk driving, and rightfully so, but not much mention of distracted driving. Showing graphic images of the results of distracted driving would give a better picture to young drivers of how just checking their phone could cause things to go horribly wrong. Sometimes a scare tactic is the most useful way to go about dealing with such a serious issue. Giving training that really cracks down and stigmatizes using one's phone while would make a difference on such an impressionable age group.

Overall, distracted driving is a serious issue that we have failed to fully address as a society. There is not nearly enough anti-distracted driving rhetoric. I want to see television ads consistently that showcase the horrors of distracted driving. The only way to mitigate the issue is to change what we currently do. It will not be a quick change, but a prolonged attack should slowly make a difference. The futures of these teens are too bright to be cut short by such an unnecessary action.