



U.S. Department of Transportation
Office of Public Affairs
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590
www.dot.gov/briefing-room.html

News

DOT 174-10
Monday, September 20, 2010
Contact: Olivia Alair
Tel: 202-366-4570

U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood Announces 2009 Distracted Driving Fatality and Injury Numbers Prior to National Distracted Driving Summit

WASHINGTON – On the eve of the 2010 Distracted Driving Summit, U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood today announced that distracted driving-related crashes claimed 5,474 lives and led to 448,000 traffic injuries across the U.S. in 2009. According to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) research, distraction-related fatalities represented 16 percent of overall traffic fatalities in 2009 – the same percentage as in 2008.

In a Sunday op-ed for the Orlando Sentinel, Secretary LaHood revealed the latest statistics, but cautioned that researchers believe the epidemic of distracted driving is likely far greater than currently known. Police reports in many states still do not routinely document whether distraction was a factor in vehicle crashes, making it more difficult to know the full extent of the problem. You can read the op-ed at <http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/opinion/os-ed-distracted-drivers-ray-lahood-020100917,0,2486899.story>

“These numbers show that distracted driving remains an epidemic in America, and they are just the tip of the iceberg,” said Secretary LaHood. “Tomorrow, I’m convening our second Distracted Driving Summit in the hopes that we can continue to draw attention to the dangers of distracted driving and work together to save lives.”

The NHTSA study found that the proportion of fatalities associated with driver distraction increased from 10 percent to 16 percent between 2005 and 2009. This news comes as overall traffic fatalities fell in 2009 to their lowest levels since 1950.

According to NHTSA data, the age group with the greatest proportion of distracted drivers was the under-20 age group. Sixteen percent of all under-20 drivers involved in a fatal crash were reported to have been distracted while driving. Of those drivers involved in fatal crashes who were reportedly distracted, the 30-39 year old group had the highest proportion of cell phone involvement. The report can be seen at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811379.pdf>

Tomorrow, Tuesday, September 21, 2010, Secretary LaHood will convene a second National Distracted Driving Summit in Washington, D.C. Leading transportation officials, safety advocates, law enforcement, industry representatives, researchers and the

family members of victims of distraction-related crashes will come together to address challenges and identify opportunities for national anti-distracted driving efforts. U.S. Labor Secretary Hilda Solis, U.S. Senator Jay Rockefeller and U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar will also speak at the summit. A live webcast of the summit will air on <http://www.distraction.gov>, enabling people from across the country to participate.

For more information about distracted driving and the 2010 Distracted Driving Summit, visit www.distraction.gov.

###