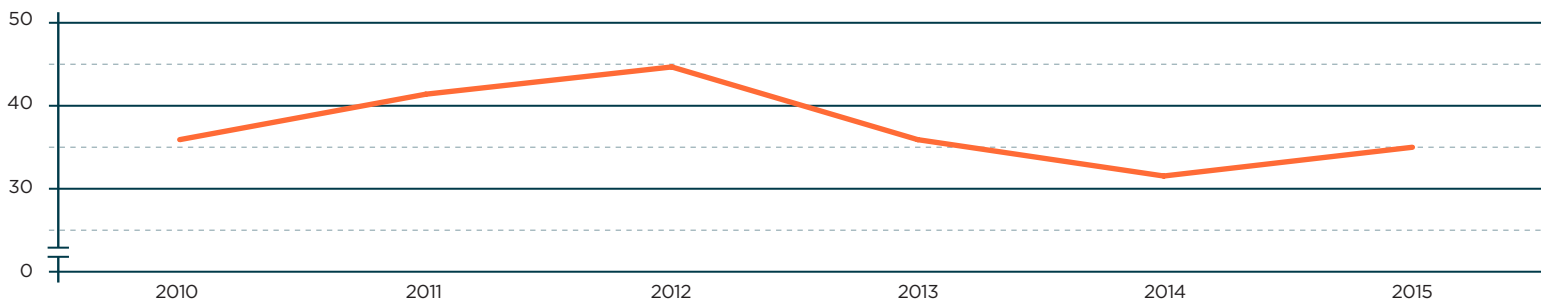


AN UPDATE ON TEXTING AND DRIVING AMONG MISSOURI COLLEGE STUDENTS

Partners in Prevention, a coalition of 21 colleges and universities across the state, is dedicated to reducing high-risk behaviors among Missouri college students. Several risky behaviors involve distracted driving, which includes texting or talking on the phone while driving, eating or drinking while driving, speeding, and becoming angry while driving. Texting while driving is one of the most dangerous behaviors because it encompasses the three main types of distraction – visual, manual and cognitive. It also reduces the driver’s focus from the road more frequently and for longer periods than other distractions (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration [NHTSA]).

Trend results from the Missouri College Health Behavior Survey (MCHBS) indicate that despite decreases in texting and driving behavior since 2012, texting and driving remains a prevalent risk behavior among Missouri college students.

Texting and Driving Rates



The reported percentages are of students reporting texting while driving “Sometimes”, “Most of the time”, and “Always”.

DISCUSSION

NHTSA reports that at least one out of every 10 traffic fatalities is a result of distracted driving; therefore, it is important that campuses continue to monitor and educate students on multiple facets of traffic safety, including distracted driving.

Since the MCHBS first began measuring texting and driving behavior in 2010, a little more than a third of Missouri college students have reported this behavior each year. Texting and driving peaked in 2012 with 44% of students reporting this behavior. By 2014, texting and driving dropped to the lowest recorded rates of 32%. However, in the past year there has been a gradual increase to 35%.

Dangerous Driving Behaviors of Missouri College Students	2013	2015	Percent Improvement
Reported infrequently wearing a safety belt	7%	5%	29%
Reported drinking and driving at least once	24%	21%	13%
Reported texting and driving at least sometimes	36%	35%	3%

When compared to other dangerous driving behaviors, students are texting and driving at much higher rates than they are driving without seatbelts

or drinking and driving. Additionally, while we have observed reductions in other driving behaviors over the past two years, texting and driving has remained relatively constant. Interestingly, students who report texting while driving also report all the other distracted driving behaviors at much higher levels.

Students who text and drive are...

- **73% more likely** to talk on a cell phone
- **45% more likely** to go 10 mph or more over the speed limit
- **40% more likely** to change a musical component
- **40% more likely** to eat or drink while driving
- **32% more likely** to drive while drowsy
- **31% more likely** to become angry at other drivers
- **13% more likely** to not wear a seatbelt

SUMMARY

Continued monitoring indicates reductions in risky driving behaviors and, specifically, texting while driving. While there appear to be significant improvements since 2012, texting and driving is still disproportionately high compared to other dangerous behaviors, such as impaired driving and driving without a safety belt. It is important for campuses to continue efforts to educate their students about the dangers of text messaging and driving.

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