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LIBERTY MUTUAL AND SADD STUDY FINDS TEXTING WHILE DRIVING BY TEENS NOT AFFECTED BY THEIR AWARENESS OF THE DANGERS; TEXT CONVERSATIONS WITH MOM AND DAD ON THE RISE

Photos, Video, Social Media Also Popular Uses of Cell Phones While Behind the Wheel

BOSTON – October 19, 2011 – Teen drivers are becoming increasingly aware of the potential dangers of texting while driving, yet it's not curbing the behavior. According to a 2011 teen driving study by [Liberty Mutual Insurance](#) and [SADD](#) (Students Against Destructive Decisions), more than half (53 percent) of the 2,294 high school students surveyed say they text while they drive at least sometimes, and 28 percent admit doing so often or very often.

Ironically, the study, which Liberty Mutual and SADD have regularly conducted since 2000, shows a steady increase in belief by teens that texting while driving is a significant distraction. In 2008, only 38 percent of teens reported texting while driving was very/extremely distracting. The following year, 48 percent of teens said that texting was the most distracting behavior while driving; a sentiment that then soared to 59 percent in 2011.

The Liberty Mutual/SADD Teen Driving Study reports these key findings:

- For some young drivers, text messaging occurs at alarmingly high levels. More than 40 percent of teens who text while driving send more than 10 messages from behind the wheel each day. Nearly one in ten teens text 50 or more messages daily while driving.

- Who are they texting? Teens are increasingly likely to text mom and dad: 63 percent in the 2011 study vs. 55 percent in 2009. Friends remain the most popular recipients of text messages, yet at a decreasing rate: 70 percent in 2011 vs. 80 percent in 2009.
- What are they texting? 59 percent of teens say they are texting their parents about where they are.

“While it’s important for parents to know where their children are and what they are doing, they need to take a firm stance against texting while driving and other distracted driving behaviors,” said Stephen Wallace, Senior Advisor for Policy, Research, and Education at SADD. “This research shows that despite awareness campaigns and laws against texting while driving, it’s a common behavior among teens that parents inadvertently may be aiding.”

Texting is only one of several driving distractions available to teens in today’s plugged-in world. The Liberty Mutual/SADD study revealed that teens at least sometimes use these technologies while driving:

- 73 percent change songs on their iPod or MP3 player
- 67 percent talk on a cell phone
- 13 percent use their cell phone to access the Internet
- 13 percent update their Facebook status or MySpace account from their cell phones
- 10 percent take pictures or videos with their cell phones
- 4 percent use an iPad or tablet PC

“Technology surrounds us, adding more responsibility upon parents to talk to their teen drivers about when and where to use it,” said Dave Melton, a driving safety expert with Liberty Mutual and managing director of Global Safety. “The reality is, the ‘don’t talk on the phone while driving’ conversation of a few years ago, must today expand to ‘don’t use your cell phone, MP3 player or any computer device for any reason while driving.’ If you’re not talking about it, chances are they will do it.”

Liberty Mutual and SADD believe that effective parent-teen communication is critical in helping teens recognize and choose safe driving behaviors. Yet, for many teens having a conversation with their parents about driving safety would be a first, as nearly 13 percent of teens say their parents have never talked to them about driving safety.

Tools like the [Liberty Mutual/SADD Parent-Teen Driving Contract](#) or SADD's Contract for Life can be good facilitators of this conversation, with potentially positive results: 65 percent of teen drivers say having a contract in place that sets expectations, consequences and rewards would help them earn more trust from their parents. Additionally, 27 percent of teens admit a safe driving contract would change their driving habits and 45 percent say it would make it easier to withstand peer pressure from friends or passengers.

The [Liberty Mutual/SADD Parent-Teen Driving Contract](#) is just one of the many resources to help teens become safe, responsible drivers found at www.LibertyMutual.com/TeenDriving. The website also provides [state-by-state teen driving laws](#), practice permit tests, and video demonstrations of safe driving techniques. Other important safety information can be found at www.sadd.org.

About the Study

Liberty Mutual and SADD commissioned ORC International, to conduct a qualitative and quantitative study to measure teen driving attitudes and behaviors. The study was initiated with a series of four focus groups held in Harrisburg, Pa., and San Francisco, Calif., in October 2010, followed by a survey of 2,294 teens in eleventh and twelfth grades from 28 recruited high schools across the country in January 2011. Overall findings for the study can be interpreted with a 95 percent confidence interval with an error margin of +/- 2.02 percent.

About Liberty Mutual Insurance

"Helping people live safer, more secure lives" since 1912, Boston-based Liberty Mutual Group is a diversified global insurer and third largest property and casualty insurer in the U.S. based on A.M. Best Company's report of 2010 net written premium. The Group also ranks 82nd on the Fortune 100 list of largest corporations in the U.S. based on 2010 revenue. As of December 31, 2010, Liberty Mutual Group had \$112.4 billion in consolidated assets, \$95.4 billion in consolidated liabilities, and \$33.2 billion in annual consolidated revenue.

Liberty Mutual Group offers a wide range of insurance products and services, including personal automobile, homeowners, workers compensation, property, commercial automobile, general liability, global specialty, group disability, reinsurance and surety. Liberty Mutual Group (www.libertymutualgroup.com) employs over 45,000 people in more than 900 offices throughout the world.

About SADD

SADD, the nation's leading peer-to-peer youth education, prevention, and activism organization, is committed to empowering young people to lead initiatives in their schools and communities. Founded in 1981, today SADD has thousands of chapters in middle schools, high schools, and colleges. SADD highlights prevention of many destructive behaviors and attitudes that are harmful to young people, including underage drinking, other drug use, risky and impaired driving, and teen violence and suicide. To

become a Friend of SADD or for more information, visit sadd.org, parentteenmatters.org or follow SADD on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

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