

## Texting- a silent killer distracting drivers on our roads

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A recent study by Market and Opinion Firm Ipsos OTX<sup>1</sup>, which polled 14,160 drivers, found that South Africa was one of the countries with the highest proportions of participants (41%) indicating they have texted, emailed or used social media while driving.

Consider this - five seconds is the average time your eyes are off the road while texting<sup>2</sup>, meaning that if you were travelling at about 88km per hour, you would - in this time - be able to cover the length of a football field. This essentially means that within a matter of seconds, you can cause an accident because you answered a text or sent a tweet.

Similarly, globally, statistics from Texting and Driving Safety<sup>3</sup>, point to the fact that a person is six times more likely to cause an accident by texting and driving, than if they had to drive intoxicated - not that this is advocated by any means. This is because texting slows down brake-reaction speed by 18%, meaning that by the time you have realised you need to break - it is likely too late.

Statistics like this beg the question - why are the dangers of texting and driving not receiving more attention?

Niki Cronje, Group Marketing at IMPERIAL I-Pledge says: "The one moment in time where you are distracted and skip a robot, or a child runs out into the road, can mean the difference between life and death and no text message is worth jeopardising yourself or someone else's life."

Cronje advises drivers to disconnect from the digital world when they enter their vehicles.

"We have become addicted to constant tech-connectivity. To break the cycle, before you get into your vehicle, make sure that all relevant people you may need to speak to have been contacted. For example, let the kids know that you're on your way to fetch them from school and only look at your phone again once you have arrived at the destination."

"Politely let people know that you are not accessible while driving, and that safety is your foremost concern. To resist the urge to text, lock your mobile phone in your boot. Getting into this habit will not only curb the urge to text, but will reduce your risk of a potential smash and grab or fatal accident."

If you can't bear to be separated from your mobile phone - then turn it onto silent, removing the temptation to respond. If you have a passenger, hand over the device to him or her to respond on your behalf.

"Road safety starts with each and every one of us - it is a conscious decision to

take responsibility for your actions on the road and it is up to us all to stop engaging in activities that put our, as well as others, lives at risk while on the road.”

“It is important for people to therefore, pledge their own commitment to road safety - take a pledge not to text or engage in social media while driving - remember the other person using the road could be your child, mother, father, sibling!”

Source: [IPledge](#)