

Date: November 9, 2010

Contact: David Corum, CPCU
(484) 831-9046
corum@cpcuia.org

Almost One-In-Five Drivers Reports Texting While Driving in the Last Thirty Days

MALVERN, Pa. — Almost one-in-five drivers in the United States (18 percent) reported texting while driving in the last 30 days according to a new survey from the Insurance Research Council (IRC). Younger drivers were much more likely than older drivers to say that they were texting while driving. Forty-one percent of drivers age 25 to 39, compared to only 5 percent of drivers 55 and older, reported texting while driving. Thirty-one percent of drivers age 16 to 24 said they had texted while driving in the last 30 days.

Driver distraction was involved in 5,474 fatal crashes in 2009, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation, and in approximately 18 percent of fatal crashes, cell phone use was a factor. Using a cell phone or smart phone to send or read text messages is especially dangerous behavior. One recent study suggests that the risk of a crash or near-crash event was 23 times as great for those texting while driving than for non-distracted drivers.

“These findings confirm that a large number of drivers are engaging in very dangerous behavior,” said Elizabeth Sprinkel, Senior Vice President of the IRC. “The need to find an effective response to this behavior is becoming increasingly clear.”

One response to texting while driving is the use of new products and services designed to block individual cell phones or smart phones from sending or receiving text messages while in a moving vehicle. In this survey, IRC found substantial public support for these products and services. Sixty-two percent of drivers thought that blocking services and products were a good or excellent idea, and 53 percent said they would be somewhat or very likely to use such a product or service if it involved no additional cost. Interest dropped sharply, however, if a blocking product or service involved a \$10 monthly cost.

The report, *Public Attitude Monitor 2010: Texting While Driving*, is based on an online survey of more than 1,400 licensed drivers conducted on behalf of the IRC by Harris Interactive, a market research firm. The survey was conducted between August 20 and September 7, 2010. For more detailed information on

the study's methodology and findings, contact David Corum by phone at (484) 831-9046 or by email at corum@cpcuia.org. Copies of the study are available at \$65, for an electronic version, or \$80 each, for a printed copy. Visit IRC's Web site at www.ircweb.org for more information.

###

NOTE TO EDITORS: The Insurance Research Council is a division of the American Institute For CPCU. The Institute is an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to providing educational programs, professional certification, and research for the property and casualty insurance business. The IRC provides timely and reliable research to all parties involved in public policy issues affecting insurance companies and their customers. The IRC does not lobby or advocate legislative positions. It is supported by leading property-casualty insurance organizations.

