

PAUL GARDNER – DISTRACTED DRIVING TRANSCRIPT

[00:00]

(Peppy music plays while introductory slides show the Institute for Transportation and Iowa Department of Transportation logos and then the video title of “Distracted Driving”)

[00:06] [Speaker – Paul Gardner, Iowa State Patrol Officer]:

(Music quiets)

So, how can an officer tell whether or not somebody’s on their phone? That’s a great question, because sometimes it’s very obvious and sometimes it’s not.

[00:14]

(Brief b-roll zooms out on a still image of a hand texting via their cell phone while behind the steering wheel of a vehicle, with effects suggesting the vehicle is driving fast down a multi-lane roadway)

There are some things you can do on your phone.

[00:14]

(Brief b-roll video shows a person calling the police using a hands-free console on the dashboard, which fades to black to then briefly show b-roll video of the same console providing navigation)

You can make an emergency phone call, you can navigate, but there are ways to tell whether or not somebody is navigating, and...

[00:14]

(Brief b-roll video shows a person texting while approaching a stop sign)

...so, if they’re on their phone and to me it looks like they’re texting, then I can still write them a ticket. I would just have to go in front of a judge in the courtroom and tell them why I thought that they were texting.

[00:38]

(Brief b-roll zooms in on a still image of a person using their mounted cell phone while behind the steering wheel of a vehicle that appears to be on the roadway of a residential area, with additional text on screen that states, “In Iowa, over 1,000 total crashes and over 400 injury crashes occur annually due to a driver distracted by cell phone use or other electronic device” and credited to “Dennis Kleen. Systems and Administration Bureau. Iowa Department of Transportation”)

But, when you're on the phone for a prolonged amount of time and the screen doesn't look like it's a map, that's one way we could tell.

[00:45]

(Brief b-roll video shows a young driver putting their cell phone in their purse and then stowing it in the center console)

Teenage drivers are supposed to be hands-free. So, if they're operating on an instruction permit, a school permit, or an intermediate license, they cannot have a phone in their hand at all.

[00:54]

(Brief b-roll zooms in on a still image of a teenage driver talking on their cell phone while behind the steering wheel of a vehicle)

So, they have to, if they are going to talk on the phone, it needs to be on a Bluetooth device or...

[01:00]

(Brief b-roll video shows a person navigating a hands-free console to make a call to their best friend)

...something hands-free. There's so many things that can take your attention off the roadway besides just being on a cell phone. That could be just as dangerous.

[01:10]

(Brief b-roll video shows the view of a person driving on a rural highway, with the person's alert eyes reflected in the rearview mirror)

So, when you're behind the wheel, you have to give driving your full-time attention. What's illegal about distracted driving is being on your phone.

[01:17]

(Brief b-roll video shows a person changing the radio station, which fades to black to then briefly show b-roll video of two people talking in a vehicle while one of them drives on a highway)

It's not illegal to change the radio station. It's not illegal to talk to your friends in the vehicle or family members.

[01:22]

(Brief b-roll zooms in on a still image of a solar-power paneled roadway sign lit up to relay the message, "Don't text and drive")

Up until a couple years back, texting and driving or any kind of distracted driving was a secondary violation. So, that means that I would've had to have something else to stop the vehicle for before I could take enforcement action on using their cell phone.

[01:22]

(Brief b-roll zooms in on a still image of a shoulder of a two-lane roadway with a sheriff's vehicle that has pulled over another vehicle, with the sheriff and a second person standing by the driver side window of the second vehicle, with additional text that states, "In 2022, 9,201 distracted driving crashes in Iowa resulted in 20 deaths, 3,652 injured persons, and more than \$81 million in property damage" and credited to "Iowa Department of Public Safety. 2023. U Drive. U Text. U Pay. <https://dps.iowa.gov/u-drive-u-text-u-pay>"

Nowadays, depending on what kind of license you have, if it's blatantly obvious, that's a primary violation. So, if I see somebody on their phone and it's very obvious that they are texting or looking at social media, doing any Snapchatting, whatever it might be, I can stop them and write them a ticket for it.

[01:53]

(Video of Paul Gardner fades to black as louder peppy music resumes, while outro slides provide a disclaimer that reads, "This video was developed by the Institute for Transportation (InTrans) at Iowa State University for the Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) with the purpose to provide the material for driver education instructors in Iowa. InTrans is responsible for the facts and the accuracy of the information presented herein as of May 1, 2025. Driver education instructors may use the material in its entirety or may use any of the material individually. The material is for educational purposes only. It is strictly prohibited to sell any part of this video. If any of the material is reused, please credit the Iowa DOT. For more information or questions, please contact Vania Boyd, Driver Education and Motorcycle Rider Education Manager, Iowa DOT, Vania.boyd@iowadot.us." and show the Institute for Transportation and Iowa Department of Transportation logos)