Safety Tip of the Month

Distracted Walking the New and Dangerous Safety Hazard

Walking around while paying attention to your cell phone screen instead of the world around you is dangerous. Texting and other use of a smartphone while walking has been identified as a hazard for pedestrian deaths, which have increased by 25 percent from 2010 to 2015 and are continuing to rise. The problem of distracted walking is a relatively new one. Each year, more and more people are injured as a result of texting, talking or listening to music while on their cell phones.

This month Risk Management would like to highlight the hazards and some methods that government agencies and general industry have deployed in order to abate this startling trend.

The Surprising Dangers of Cell Phone Distractions

Source: www.protectiveinsurance.com

Did you know that 91% of the U.S. population now owns a cell phone? Per a report from Digital Trends in June 2015, Americans spend 4.7 hours a day on their smartphones. The average American is awake for just over 15 hours a day, which means we spend about a third of our time each day on our phones, and we are likely not sitting or standing still in a safe place for that entire duration.

A professor at William Paterson University conducted a study of more than 21,000 pedestrians at five of the most dangerous intersections in Manhattan and found that nearly half of pedestrians crossing on a “DON’T WALK” signal and about one-third crossing on a “WALK” signal were distracted.

Typing (texting) or reading a text alters a pedestrian’s gait, speed and walking pattern.

These pedestrians were wearing headphones, talking and/or looking down at an electronic device. The American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons (AAOS) refers to these distracted pedestrians as “Digital Deadwalkers.” Per the AAOS, more and more pedestrians fall down stairs, trip over curbs or other objects and step into traffic each year, causing injury and even death.

Everyday Examples of Injury

Source: www.compliance.gov

A teenage girl in New York City fell six feet through an open manhole while texting. She sustained minor injuries but was exposed to raw sewage. A Florida teen was not so fortunate; he died from injuries received when he stepped into the path of oncoming cars as he crossed a busy city street while texting. A university exchange student stepped into the path of a bus while jogging and listening to an Ipod in North Carolina. A man sustained a broken finger when he tripped and fell while talking on his cell phone.

Safety Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>April 2018</th>
<th>May 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barry J. Nidorf</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood Elementary</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Padrinos</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LACHSA</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leuzinger HS</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawndale HS</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LACOE Downey</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What Cities Are Attempting to Do About Distracted Walking
Source: cbslocal.com, npr.com

Honolulu, Hawaii
Honolulu visitors and residents now run the risk of being ticketed for using a cellphone while walking in a crosswalk. The ban on walking into a crosswalk while using a mobile phone went into effect in October of 2017.

Mayor Kirk Caldwell signed Bill 6, also known as the Distracted Walking Law, in July. At the time, he said that Honolulu held “the unfortunate distinction of being a major city with more pedestrians being hit in crosswalks, particularly our seniors, than almost any other city in the county.”

Montclair, California
Walking while talking on the phone or listening to music via earbuds or headphones can now earn pedestrians a $100 fine in Montclair.

According to the ordinance, pedestrians cannot “cross a street or highway while engaged in a phone call, viewing a mobile electronic device or with both ears covered or obstructed by personal audio equipment” like over-the-ear headphones and ear buds. There are, however, exceptions for 911 calls, medically-prescribed hearing aids and emergency first responders who are on duty.

City officials say pedestrians now account for 15 percent of all vehicle-related fatalities. A first violation costs $100, and doubles if caught again within a year. If still within that same 12-month period, subsequent violations can cost as much as $500 each time.

Throughout Nevada
ePEDemic.org, a pedestrian safety organization, has placed images such as alligators and building drop-offs on the ground in front of crosswalks near the Joe Crowley Student Union, around campus and into Midtown.

The images are designed to grab pedestrians’ attention before they cross the road. Each image is accompanied by the campaign slogan “Walking while distracted is just as dangerous” and the ePEDemic.org logo.

Nevada is one of the worst states when it comes to pedestrian fatalities. The number of pedestrians killed on Nevada roads has risen each year since 2010, and in 2016, 80 pedestrians were killed, compared to 41 pedestrians in 2010.

5 Simple Tips for Pedestrians to Stay Safe
Source: aaos.com
1. Focus on the people and obstacles in front of you.
2. Maintain a volume on headphones where you can still hear sounds of traffic.
3. Don’t jaywalk. Cross streets at the traffic light.
4. Look up, not down, especially near curbs, intersections and escalators.
5. Stay alert in mall and other parking lots, especially when dark.

Texting is the most dangerous distraction while driving because it involves manual, visual, and cognitive distractions simultaneously.

If we think it is dangerous to drive and text, wouldn’t we also think texting while walking should be considered dangerous?