



TOIRMA Update

By Jim Donelan

TOIRMA Executive Director

Don't Text and Drive

REMEMBER THE DAYS when we used phones that were physically attached to our walls? I can even recall when my aunt and uncle had a rotary phone. For you young ones reading this article, a rotary phone required you to put your finger in a dial and turn it, and depending on which number you desired, the phone then clicked off the corresponding digit. In the early 1990s I became hi-tech and acquired my first cell phone, a bag-phone. Then in 1994, I stepped it up a notch and began using a flip phone. This phone in particular was unique because it wasn't attached to your vehicle and resembled the *Star Trek* communicator. Although the service wasn't always reliable, it was at this time that our mobile world began to change dramatically.

Today mobile phones are everywhere. It is hard to go into any public place and not see people on their devices. Most mobile devices are mini-computers that allow for texting, emailing, music, video, web browsing,



STAY ALIVE!
Don't Text and Drive.



and how could I forget, phone calling. Families sit at restaurants looking at their phones rather than each other. Obviously, I could go on forever about social problems that have emerged as a result of this, but that is a conversation for a different article. From a safety perspective, the difficulty with mobile devices is people are using them when they should not. This in-turn is causing accidents, injuries, and losses.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) texting while driving is illegal in 47 states. In Illinois there is a ban on the use of hand-held devices while driving. Drivers must use hands-free or voice-operated mode, when driving a vehicle.

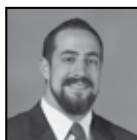
Serving the legal needs of townships and road districts

HEYL ROYSTER HAS PRACTICED IN THE FIELD OF GOVERNMENTAL LAW FOR MORE THAN THREE DECADES, WITH A SPECIFIC EMPHASIS ON TOWNSHIP REPRESENTATION.

OUR CLIENTELE IS FOUND IN COUNTIES, LARGE AND SMALL, OVER ROUGHLY 65% OF THE STATE.



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Driving Facts*

- In 2016, 9.2% of fatal crashes were reported as related distracted driving.
- In 2016, 3,450 people were killed in crashes involving distracted drivers.
- According to a Virginia Tech Transportation Institute study, texting while driving takes the driver's eyes off of the road for an average of 4.6 seconds. This is the equivalent of driving the entire length of a football field at 55 mph.
- Text messaging requires visual, manual, and cognitive attention from the driver; it is by far one of the most alarming distractions.

Needless to say, as your risk managing partner these facts are disconcerting. Whether it's a township/road district or personal vehicle, drivers need to be cognizant of the dangers of texting while driving. Not texting and driving not only helps avoid injuries, wrecks and fatalities, it can also reduce liabilities.

Below is a listing of NHTSA tips designed to help combat texting and driving. They are simple and effective.

TOIRMA Board Declares Dividend

The TOIRMA Board of Trustees declared a dividend to eligible members of the TOIRMA Program at its February meeting. Members that have been in TOIRMA for the past five consecutive years will receive a dividend equalling 15% of their corresponding annual contribution from the June 1, 2013 to May 31, 2014 Program Year. This marks the 28th consecutive year the Board of Trustees has issued a dividend to Members.

We are proud to be able to return a dividend to Members while maintaining a stable contribution level. The dividend this year totals \$2,146,043, for a 28-year total of \$43,558,030 returned to Members.

A dividend in the form of a check will be mailed to each eligible member's TOIRMA contact mid-March. Please keep in-mind that according to the Public Funds Deposit Act [30 ILCS 225/1], the dividend check should be deposited within **two working days**.

As always, if you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me toll-free at (888) 562-7861 or by e-mail at jdonelan@toirma.org.


NHTSA Tips*

- Designate a texter. Have passengers text for you when you are driving.
- Turn the notifications on your device off.
- Put your phone where you can't get to it. Out of sight, out of mind.

In addition to these tips, most smart phones have a function where you can turn off the texting function, and anyone that texts you when this is on will receive a text automatically letting them know you are driving your vehicle and unavailable.

As an individual you can help by following the above suggestions, and as an elected official you can assist by increasing the awareness of this alarming issue. Utilize the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's distracted driving resources available at www.distraction.gov and www.stoptextsstopwrecks.org. These tools include pledge forms, public service announcements, statistics, sample policies and press releases, and posters.

Please do your part. Help keep your family, friends, and yourself safe, "Stay Alive! Don't Text and Drive."

Thank you for your attention to these matters. If you have any questions regarding this topic, please feel free to contact me at (888) 562-7861 or by email at jdonelan@toirma.org. 

* Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) safety campaign, stoptextsstopwrecks.org