

Resource document:

Winter

Texting While Walking (TWW)

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Narrative:

Accidents involving people using portable communications devices while walking are a growing problem in densely populated areas. Such areas also have heavy traffic volume.

TWW is a type of distracted activity similar to distracted driving, but it's done outside a vehicle.

Army bases, not generally located near densely populated areas, are not yet seeing increases in this type of incident/accident.

Army populations (Soldiers, Families, Civilians) are at risk of injuries from TWW when they are in densely populated areas.

Injuries suffered texting while walking range from embarrassing to fatal.

Some areas have passed laws banning TWW.

Key Messages:

- Soldiers, Families and Civilians must understand the threat from TWW injuries while in densely populated metropolitan areas.
- Habits developed while living at military installations may cause problems in other areas which represent a significant change in highway/street traffic volume.
- Department of Defense bans the use of hand-held wireless devices while operating motor vehicles on DoD facilities. Many municipal governments do the same, and some are now prohibiting TWW.
- Spatial awareness is critical to maintain a mental and physical understanding of your surroundings while walking and operating a portable wireless device.

Talking points:

Understand the regulations for using a portable wireless device because they may vary from

location to location.

Complacency developed texting while walking on DoD facilities can prove fatal if practiced in other more densely populated and trafficked areas.

Ask yourself if you really need to be texting while walking or be otherwise distracted while using a portable electronic device for surfing online or playing video games.

Tips:

Beware the threat of TWW in densely populated areas because similar activities on a DoD facility may not present the same threat level and individuals may become complacent.

Remember, TWW is a type of distracted activity similar to distracted driving, but it's done outside a vehicle.

Researchers believe the prevalence of text messaging is to blame for the increase in reported accidents involving TWW and that September and October are the problem's deadliest months because teens are walking to, from, and around schools.

Smart motorists know the best way to talk on their portable device is to get out of traffic and come to a stop so they can talk, and the same thing is true with someone receiving a text while walking: if you're in a busy area, stop and complete your texting in a safe area, then resume walking.

Historical Reference:

<https://safety.army.mil/>

<http://www.safekids.org/>

Statistics:

- Approximately 1,152 people were treated in hospital emergency rooms in the United States last year for injuries suffered while walking and using a cell phone or some other electronic device, according to the U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. The total is probably higher because an accident victim may not report they were using a portable electronic device at the time of the accident.
- Overall traffic deaths in the United States were lower in 2010 than the year before, but
- Pedestrian fatalities rose by 4.2 percent and injuries by 19 percent, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. It's not clear how many of the pedestrian deaths and injuries involved cell phones and other electronics because the police don't collect that information, Beckman explained.
- A report entitled 'Walking Safely: A Report to the Nation,' from Safe Kids, a global nonprofit organization, shows that in recent years, pedestrian injuries among 16-19 year-olds increased 25 percent. Teens aged 14-19 made up half of all child pedestrian injuries, according to the report.

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