

# DRIVE SMART Virginia

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## Survey: Drivers Are Using Phones In Riskier Ways

*Virginia drivers observed in a 2018 roadside survey were 57% more likely to be manipulating a cell phone than drivers observed in a 2014 survey.*

**Richmond, VA** - Virginia drivers observed in a 2018 Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) survey were 57% more likely to be manipulating a cell phone than drivers in a 2014 survey (<https://m.iihs.org/mobile/news/mobilenews/distracted-driving-cellphone-interactions-up-57-percent-over-prior-survey>).

Studies consistently show that manipulating a cell phone significantly increases crash risk. The IIHS survey results indicate a dangerous trend in driver behavior.

Another 2018 IIHS survey found that 31% of respondents in states without a hand-held phone ban reported that they sometimes engage in hand-held cell phone conversations, compared with 14% of drivers surveyed in states with a hand-held phone ban.

38% of drivers surveyed said they had read emails or texts while driving during the past month, and a third reported that they sent emails or texts.

Traffic fatalities in Virginia have increased every year since 2013. In 2017, according to the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles, 25% of traffic fatalities were caused by distracted driving.

The DRIVE SMART Virginia #HandsFreeVA initiative is a diverse group of law enforcement agencies, businesses, and associations determined to curb the distracted driving epidemic.

“Our goal is to reduce injuries and fatalities on the roadways of Virginia,” said Janet Brooking, DRIVE SMART Virginia Executive Director. “Distracted driving has been identified as a leading causative factor, and hand-held phone use is the most pressing issue due to the cognitive, visual, and manual distractions involved.”

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## **About DRIVE SMART Virginia**

DRIVE SMART Virginia is a non-profit organization charged with raising awareness and changing behavior to improve the safety of the roadways of the Commonwealth. It endeavors to improve the lives of all Virginians through public information and education initiatives. Founded in 1995, the organization is led by a diverse board representing safety advocates, the insurance industry, and law enforcement. DRIVE SMART's mission is to advance its safe driving message by fostering community partnerships, creating educational campaigns, designing and distributing educational materials, public speaking and training, and advocating for traffic safety initiatives.