

# Distracted Driving Study

## What is Distracted Driving?

Distracted driving can be used as a catch-all term to describe a situation in which the operator of a vehicle is not paying full attention to not only their surroundings, but their own actions as well. Such an activity increases the risk of crashes, especially roadway departures and intersection crashes.

Three main types of distraction:

- **Visual** – Anything that causes drivers to take their eyes off the road
- **Manual** – Anything that takes one or both hands off the wheel
- **Cognitive** – Anything that takes a driver’s mind off of driving

While all distractions can compromise safety, there are some, such as texting, that are considered more dangerous because it incorporates all three types of distraction.

## Purpose of the Study

Upon beginning research for distracted driving, it was found that no standard methodology was being used to collect data. Eastgate staff developed a method of data collection in an effort to make assumptions about who is distracted while driving and what types of distractions are most prevalent. Eastgate will provide the findings to local safety groups and communities to help with safety outreach.

*Some of the more common distracting activities are listed below:*

- ◆ *Using a cell phone or texting*
- ◆ *Eating and drinking*
- ◆ *Focusing on passengers*
- ◆ *Personal grooming*
- ◆ *Reading (including maps)*
- ◆ *Using a navigation system*
- ◆ *Changing the radio station, CD, or MP3 player*



The City of Canfield imposed a texting while driving ban in 2010 as a traffic safety measure in response to the nationwide increase of texting-related traffic accidents.

## In This Study

- Existing Research
- Eastgate’s Methodology
- Results & Findings
- Conclusions
- Future of the Study

## Existing Research

Many organizations have begun researching distracted driving habits. The National Safety Council, AAA, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and [Distraction.gov](http://Distraction.gov), a collaboration between the U.S. Department of Transportation and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, all conduct their own research and maintain useful statistics, fact sheets, reports, and resources on the topic.

The NHTSA publishes a research note for distracted driving statistics by year. Some of the most important statistics from the 2013 edition are below:

### “Other” Distractions

- Searching Car/ Reaching into Back Seat
- Reading
- Listening to Headphones
- Doing Hair/Makeup
- Dog Sitting on Lap
- Using a Laptop

- Ten percent of fatal crashes, 18 percent of injury crashes, and 16 percent of all police-reported crashes in 2013 were reported as distraction-affected crashes
- In 2013, there were 3,154 people killed and an estimated 424,000 injured in crashes involving distracted drivers
- Ten percent of all drivers 15 to 19 years old involved in fatal crashes were reported as distracted at the time of the crash. This age group has the largest proportion of drivers who were distracted at the time of the crash

## Methodology

Eastgate staff developed a field methodology for recording instances of distracted driving at specified locations during a two hour period of time. Location selection involved identifying segments of roads with moderate to high traffic volumes to ensure a large sample size of drivers. The locations selected for the first phase of the study were primarily situated in a developed area that would ensure a wide variety of drivers.

In the field, two recorders find a parking location off the roadway that has a clear view of oncoming traffic. The recorders monitor the outside lane of traffic in one direction. Each driver is recorded by gender, age group (16-25, 26-40, 41-60, 60+), and distraction. Distractions are categorized as: undistracted, phone, device, food/drink, or other. Although distractions while a vehicle is stopped are still a safety concern, distractions were only recorded for moving vehicles.

A *phone* distraction is described as any driver visibly using a phone as an audio communication device, whether held up to the driver’s ear or on speakerphone. A *device* distraction is any visible use of a device (phone, GPS, mp3, etc.) that diverts the driver’s attention from the road. A *food/drink* distraction is recorded when a driver is seen to be eating or drinking while driving. Lastly, any other visible distraction is marked as *other* with a brief description of the action.



Community engagement in awareness activities can be an effective way to influence behavior.

## Study Locations

### US 224

Boardman Township  
Near the intersection of Hitchcock Rd  
October 1st, 2015  
2:00 - 4:00 PM

### US 422

City of Niles  
1/4 of a mile SE of Rt 46  
October 2nd, 2015  
2:00 - 4:00 PM

### Market St

Boardman Township  
Near the intersection of Southwoods Ave  
October 22nd, 2015  
1:30 - 3:30 PM

### US 62

City of Hubbard  
Near the intersection of Hall Ave SE  
November 3rd, 2015  
2:00 - 4:00 PM

### Raccoon Rd

Austintown Township  
1/8 of a mile N of New Rd  
November 12th, 2015  
2:00 - 4:00 PM

### US 422

City of Girard  
Near the intersection of Cherry St  
December 4th, 2015  
1:30 - 3:30 PM

### Mahoning Ave

City of Youngstown  
1/8 of a mile E of N West Ave  
December 8th, 2015  
2:00 - 4:00 PM

### Elm Rd

City of Warren  
Near the intersection of Overland Ave NE  
December 9th, 2015  
2:00 - 4:00 PM

## Distracted by Numbers

	% DISTRACTED	% OF RECORDED DRIVERS
FEMALE	12%	49.3%
MALE	10%	50.7%

AGE	% DISTRACTED	% OF RECORDED DRIVERS
16-25	14%	11.7%
26-40	16%	27.6%
41-60	11%	39.3%
61+	3%	21.5%

DISTRACTION TYPE	
PHONE	DEVICE
52%	35%
FOOD/DRINK	OTHER
9%	4%

MOST COMMON DRIVER
Male   41-61   1326 total
MOST DISTRACTED DRIVER
Female   26-40   151 total
HIGHEST DISTRACTION RATE
Female   26-40   17%

Full study data can be found in the appendix to this report.

## Results and Findings

For the purpose of this study, a low-level analysis will be conducted by breaking out the data into categories of gender, age, distraction type, and a look at the data as a whole.

### Gender

A relatively equal distribution of male and female drivers were observed (3,282 males and 3,194 females). Within their respective populations, 12% of female drivers (376) and 10% of male drivers (341) were distracted. Phone distractions were the most popular among both male and female drivers, but females (55%) were recorded in a higher proportion than males (48%). Device distractions were the second most popular among both drivers, but males (39%) were recorded in a higher proportion than females (31%). When examining distraction rates by age, male and female drivers exhibit similar trends that coincide with the overall data.

### Age

Breaking the data down by age reveals a few interesting statistics. The data shows that approximately 14% of drivers aged 16-25 and 11% of drivers aged 41-60 were distracted. Accounting for the total number of drivers recorded, however, shows that drivers aged 16-25 accounted for only

## Results and Findings (cont.)

15% of the total number of distracted drivers, while drivers aged 41-60 accounted for 39%. The only age group with a larger percentage of distracted drivers (40%) was 26-40, who also were distracted at the highest rate (16%). Drivers aged 61 and older had a distraction rate of 3% and represented 21.5% of the total number of drivers recorded.

### Type of Distraction

Overall, *Phone* distractions are the most prevalent (51%) followed by *Device* (35%), *Food/Drink* (9%), and *Other* (3%). But, the type of distraction varies when broken out by age group. *Device* distractions are the most common among drivers aged 16-25, while a *Phone* distraction is most common with every other age group.

## Conclusions

This study is a first step of locally understanding the issue of distracted driving. The data, while not completely accurate due to the method of collection, will provide insight into who is distracted while driving, what a driver may be distracted by, and how prevalent the issue is in our local communities.

## Future of the Study

Eastgate plans to continue this study in an effort to collect data that will enable local transportation safety agencies to better understand the driving habits within our communities. Some upcoming locations have already been identified and will be studied in the Summer of 2016. As more data is collected, Eastgate will publish fact sheets to accompany the information presented in this initial study.

The following pages include the full data collected from the study. Each location studied is broken out onto its own page. If you have any questions about the data or have any ideas for future study locations, please contact the following members of Eastgate's Staff:

- ◆ Justin Mondok—Transportation Planner  
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- ◆ Stephen Zubyk—TIP Manager  
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- ◆ Bethaney Krzys—Safety Program Manager  
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## Contact Us

for more information  
about our Distracted  
Driving Study or  
information on our  
Transportation Safety  
Program

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Suite 1000  
Youngstown, OH 44503  
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Visit us on the web at  
[www.eastgatecog.org](http://www.eastgatecog.org)



# US 224

• Boardman Township • Near the intersection of Hitchcock Road • October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015 • 2:00 - 4:00 PM

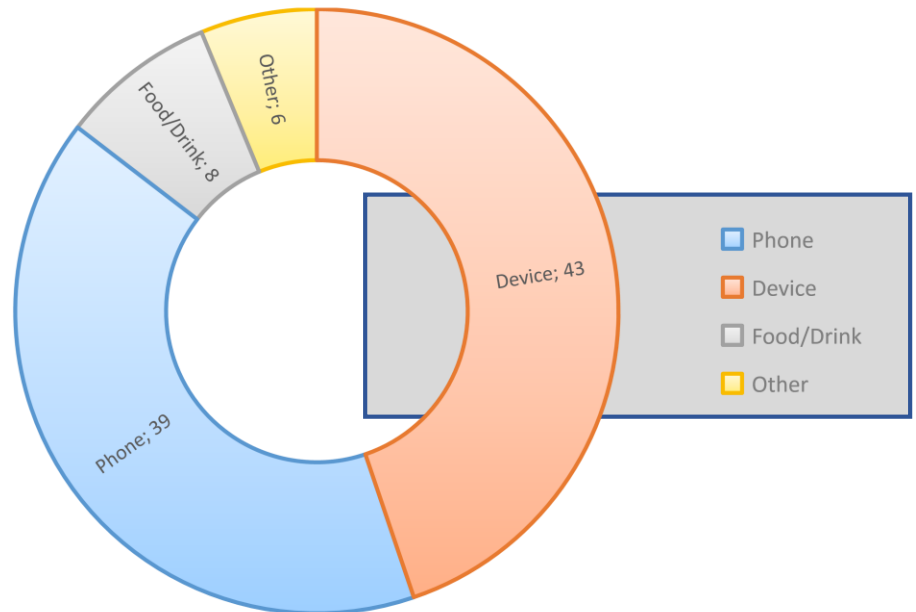
Gender	Age Group	Distracted	Undistracted	Total	% Distracted
<b>Male</b> 43.63% of Total	16-25	3	16	19	16%
	26-40	20	103	123	16%
	41-60	19	132	151	13%
	61+	2	85	87	2%
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>Female</b> 56.37% of Total	16-25	10	42	52	19%
	26-40	26	123	149	17%
	41-60	14	167	181	8%
	61+	2	107	109	2%
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>491</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>Totals:</b>		<b>96</b>	<b>775</b>	<b>871</b>	<b>11%</b>

**Most Common Driver**  
*Female 41-60 (181)*

**Most Distracted Driver**  
*Female 26-40 (26)*

**Most Common Distraction**  
*Female 16-25 (19%)*

**Distraction Types (US 224)**



**US 422** • City of Niles • ¼ of a mile SE of Route 46 • October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015 • 2:00 - 4:00 PM

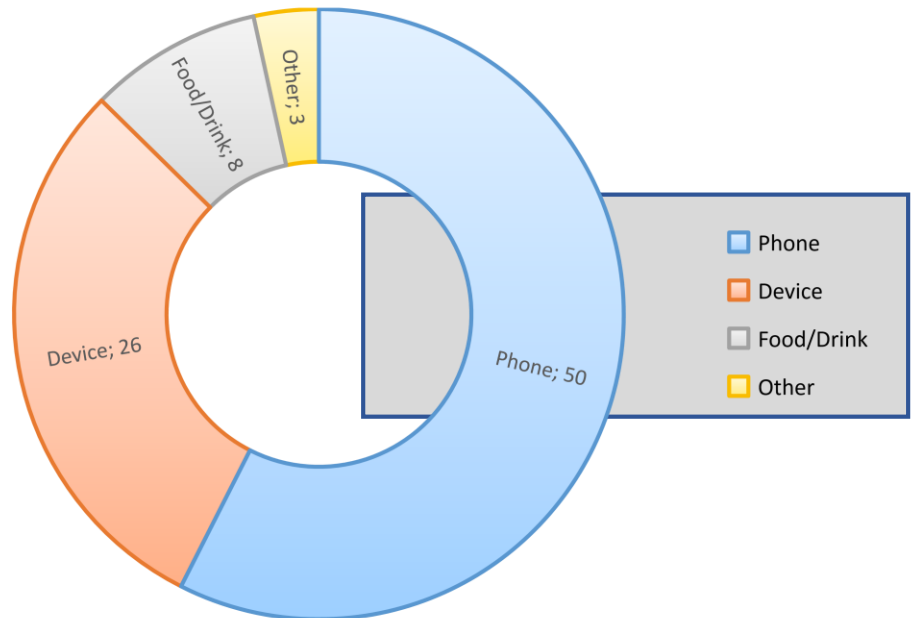
Gender	Age Group	Distracted	Undistracted	Total	% Distracted
<b>Male</b> 43.63% of Total	16-25	0	9	9	0%
	26-40	17	84	101	17%
	41-60	13	140	153	8%
	61+	0	87	87	0%
	<b>Total:</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>350</b>
<b>Female</b> 56.37% of Total	16-25	7	34	41	17%
	26-40	26	98	124	21%
	41-60	21	135	156	13%
	61+	3	59	62	5%
	<b>Total:</b>		<b>57</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>383</b>
<b>Totals:</b>		<b>87</b>	<b>646</b>	<b>733</b>	<b>12%</b>

**Most Common Driver**  
 ✓ Female 41-60 (156)

**Most Distracted Driver**  
 ✓ Female 26-40 (26)

**Most Common Distraction**  
 ✓ Female 26-40 (21%)

**Distraction Types (US 422)**



# Market Street

• Boardman Township • Near Southwoods Ave • October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015 • 1:30 - 3:30 PM

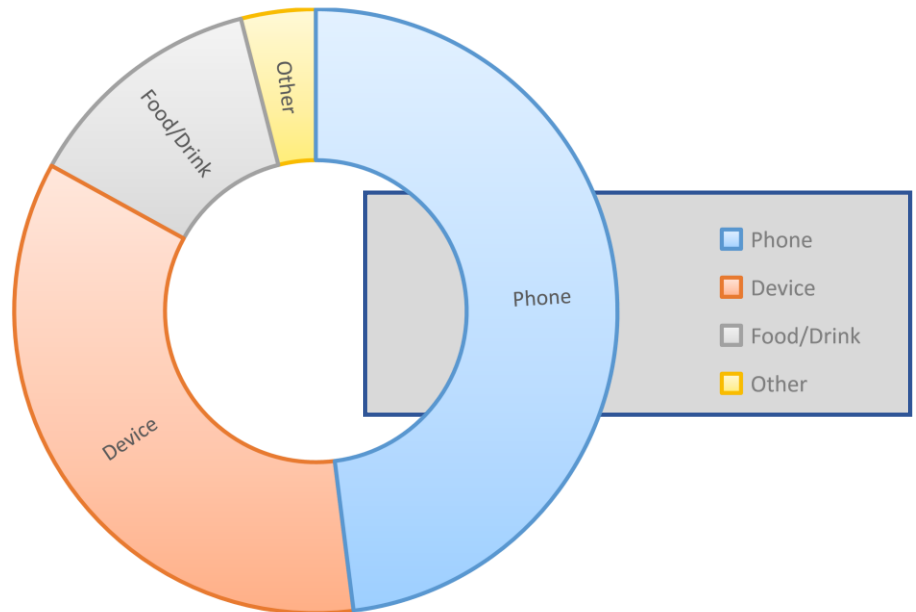
Gender	Age Group	Distracted	Undistracted	Total	% Distracted
<b>Male</b> 43.63% of Total	16-25	3	17	20	15%
	26-40	16	105	121	13%
	41-60	25	150	175	14%
	61+	5	98	103	5%
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>Female</b> 56.37% of Total	16-25	13	50	63	21%
	26-40	21	97	118	18%
	41-60	16	140	156	10%
	61+	1	66	67	1%
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>Totals:</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>723</b>	<b>823</b>	<b>12%</b>

**Most Common Driver**  
 ✓ Male 41-60 (175)

**Most Distracted Driver**  
 ✓ Male 41-60 (25)

**Most Common Distraction**  
 ✓ Female 16-25 (21%)

**Distraction Types (Market Street)**



**US 62** • City of Hubbard • Near the intersection of Hall Avenue SE • November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015 • 2:00 - 4:00 PM

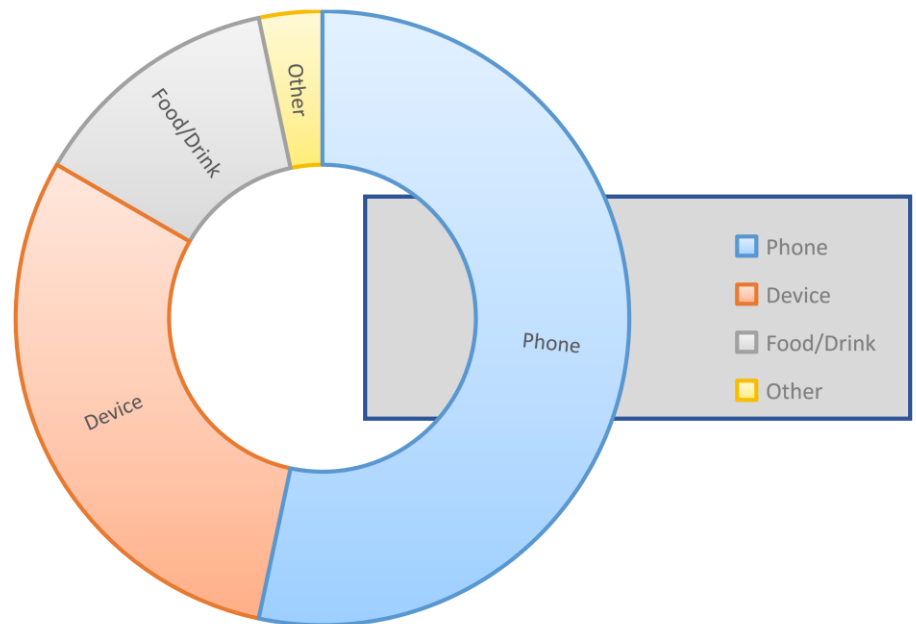
Gender	Age Group	Distracted	Undistracted	Total	% Distracted
<b>Male</b> 43.63% of Total	16-25	2	38	40	5%
	26-40	13	74	87	15%
	41-60	10	150	160	6%
	61+	3	99	102	3%
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Female</b> 56.37% of Total	16-25	7	56	63	11%
	26-40	10	80	90	11%
	41-60	12	131	143	8%
	61+	3	68	71	4%
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>Totals:</b>		<b>60</b>	<b>696</b>	<b>756</b>	<b>8%</b>

**Most Common Driver**  
 ✓ Male 41-60 (160)

**Most Distracted Driver**  
 ✓ Male 26-40 (13)

**Most Common Distraction**  
 ✓ Male 26-40 (15%)

**Distraction Types (US 62)**





# Raccoon Road

• Austintown Township • 1/8-mile N of New Rd • November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015 • 2:00 - 4:00 PM

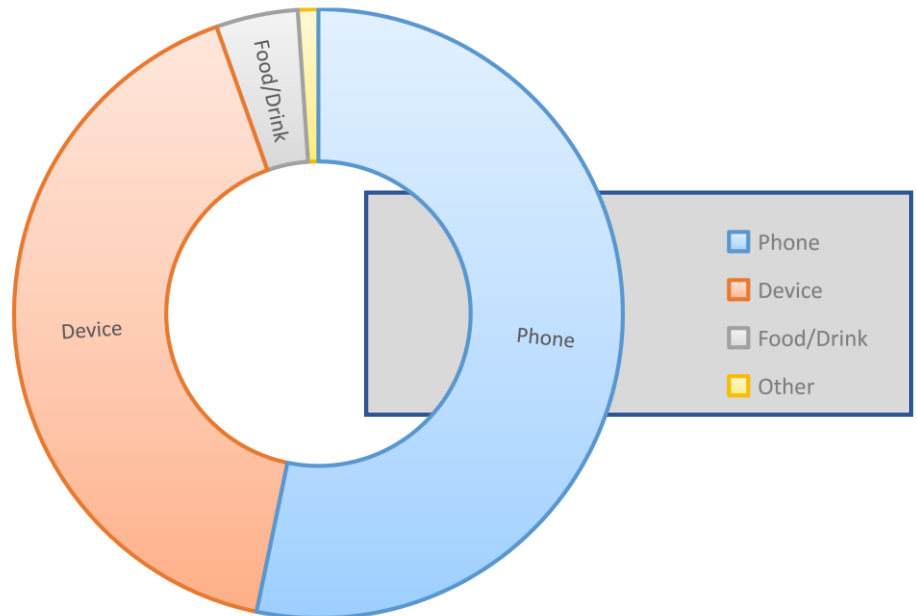
Gender	Age Group	Distracted	Undistracted	Total	% Distracted
<b>Male</b> 43.63% of Total	16-25	6	52	58	10%
	26-40	15	79	94	16%
	41-60	17	117	134	13%
	61+	3	92	95	3%
	<b>Total:</b>		<b>41</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>381</b>
<b>Female</b> 56.37% of Total	16-25	10	72	82	12%
	26-40	24	102	126	19%
	41-60	13	144	157	8%
	61+	4	92	96	4%
	<b>Total:</b>		<b>51</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>461</b>
<b>Totals:</b>		<b>92</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>842</b>	<b>11%</b>

**Most Common Driver**  
 ✓ Female 41-60 (157)

**Most Distracted Driver**  
 ✓ Female 26-40 (24)

**Most Common Distraction**  
 ✓ Female 26-40 (19%)

**Distraction Types (Raccoon Road)**



# US 422

• City of Girard • Near the intersection of Cherry Street • December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015 • 1:30 - 3:30 PM

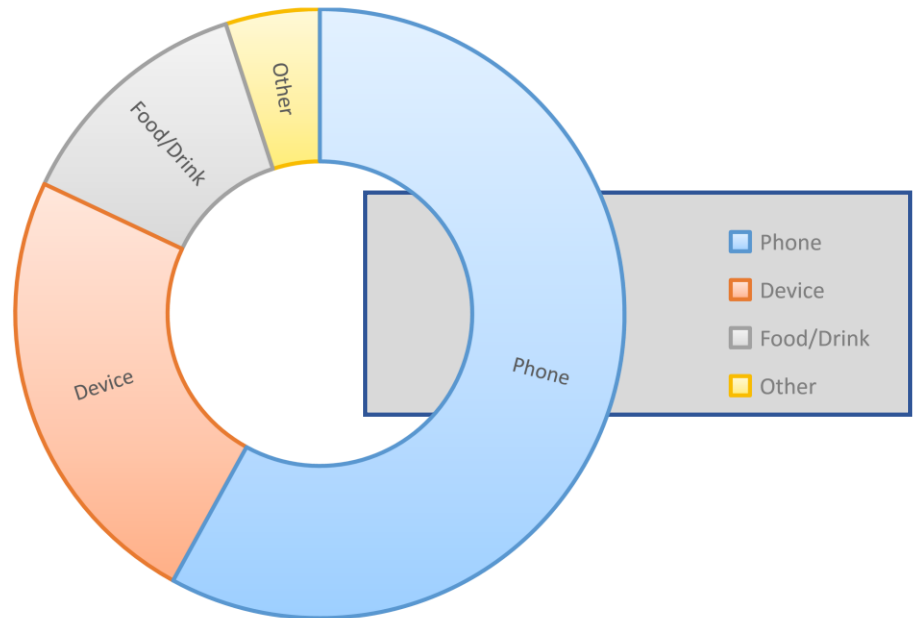
Gender	Age Group	Distracted	Undistracted	Total	% Distracted
<b>Male</b> 43.63% of Total	16-25	5	58	63	8%
	26-40	16	81	97	16%
	41-60	24	147	171	14%
	61+	5	101	106	5%
	<b>Total:</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>437</b>
<b>Female</b> 56.37% of Total	16-25	6	44	50	12%
	26-40	12	86	98	12%
	41-60	25	113	138	18%
	61+	7	65	72	10%
	<b>Total:</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>358</b>
<b>Totals:</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>695</b>	<b>795</b>	<b>13%</b>

**Most Common Driver**  
 ✓ Male 41-60 (171)

**Most Distracted Driver**  
 ✓ Female 41-60 (25)

**Most Common Distraction**  
 ✓ Female 41-60 (18%)

**Distraction Types (US 422)**



# Mahoning Ave • City of Youngstown • 1/8-mile E of N West Ave • December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015 • 2:00 - 4:00 PM

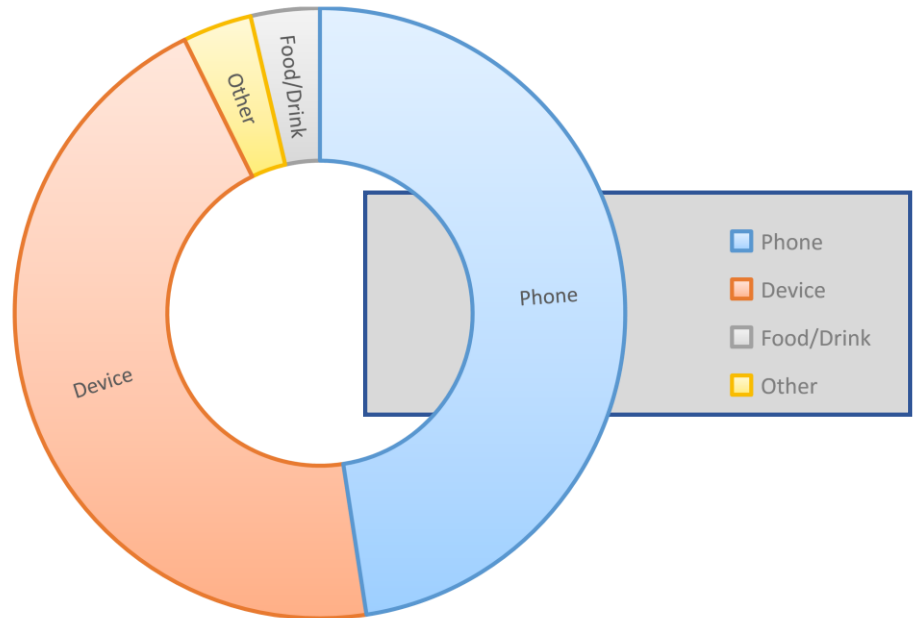
Gender	Age Group	Distracted	Undistracted	Total	% Distracted
<b>Male</b> 43.63% of Total	16-25	11	50	61	18%
	26-40	20	100	120	17%
	41-60	16	122	138	12%
	61+	0	58	58	0%
	<b>Total:</b>		<b>47</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>377</b>
<b>Female</b> 56.37% of Total	16-25	13	65	78	17%
	26-40	11	79	90	12%
	41-60	10	78	88	11%
	61+	1	28	29	3%
	<b>Total:</b>		<b>35</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>285</b>
<b>Totals:</b>		<b>82</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>12%</b>

**Most Common Driver**  
 ✓ Male 41-60 (138)

**Most Distracted Driver**  
 ✓ Male 26-40 (20)

**Most Common Distraction**  
 ✓ Male 16-25 (18%)

**Distraction Types (Mahoning Avenue)**



# Elm Road

• City of Warren • New the intersection of Overland Ave NE • December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015 • 2:00 - 4:00 PM

Gender	Age Group	Distracted	Undistracted	Total	% Distracted
<b>Male</b> 43.63% of Total	16-25	2	22	24	8%
	26-40	20	115	135	15%
	41-60	24	220	244	10%
	61+	6	140	146	4%
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>497</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>Female</b> 56.37% of Total	16-25	6	27	33	18%
	26-40	21	91	112	19%
	41-60	18	180	198	9%
	61+	3	99	102	3%
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>Totals:</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>894</b>	<b>994</b>	<b>10%</b>

**Most Common Driver**  
 ✓ Male 41-60 (244)

**Most Distracted Driver**  
 ✓ Male 41-60 (24)

**Most Common Distraction**  
 ✓ Female 26-40 (19%)

**Distraction Types (Elm Road)**

