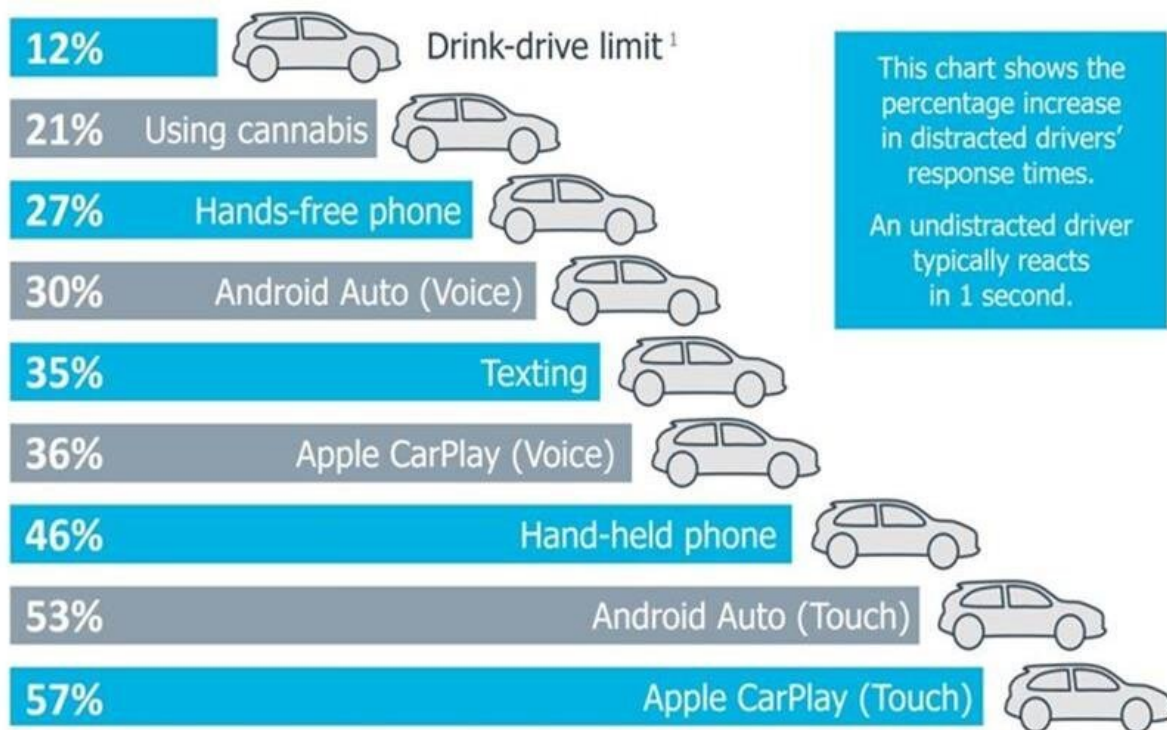


Car audio systems pose greater dangers than texting, pot

March 23 2020, by Peter Grad



Credit: IAM RoadSmart

So you thought you could block out the 24/7 news coverage of coronavirus by jumping into your car, turning up your music player and enjoying a long, safe drive along a scenic roadway dotted with early spring cherry blossoms and magnolias.

Turns out it's not as safe as you think. And it's not the virus we're talking about. It's the radio.

A study released by a British auto safety group this week reveals that cars equipped with digital entertainment systems are endangering motorists and other drivers they share the roads with.

Motorists using Apple CarPlay or Android Auto while they drive were found to display slower reaction times to obstacles in the road and to veer out of lanes while engaging with [music](#) app controls, according to the study.

More shocking, researchers found [response times](#) for drivers distracted by music apps were nearly five times longer than for drivers who test at the permitted limit for alcohol consumption (0.08 percent) and nearly three times longer than for cannabis smokers.

In tests conducted by the Transport Research Laboratory, a British organization studying the future of transportation and technology, drivers took their eyes off the road for as much as 16 seconds while handling entertainment apps. Further, motorists underestimated by about five seconds how much time they diverted their eyes from the road while handling touch controls of music players.

Using music apps proved more distracting than texting or talking on handheld phones.

In fact, while response times were better when drivers used voice commands rather than physical controls, response times still were slower than for drivers using handheld phones.

Using Apple CarPlay and Android Auto added to motorist response time by between 53 percent and 57 percent. Texting added just 35 percent

and talking on a handheld phone upped response time 46 percent.

The study also revealed that [drivers](#) struggled to maintain constant speed and distance while using apps, and were more likely to swerve from their lanes, veering off lane by up to 1.7 feet while adjusting music controls.

The research prompted the United Kingdom's largest road safety organization, IAM RoadSmart, which commissioned the study, to call upon government to monitor the growing use of automotive entertainment systems.

"We're now calling on industry and government to openly test and approve such systems and develop consistent standards that genuinely help minimize driver distraction," said Neil Greig, IAM RoadSmart director of policy and research.

He advised motorists to pay heed to the results.

"While we would like to see a review of these systems in the future, we would encourage owners of vehicles fitted with these systems to use them in the safest possible way, including setting everything up before starting a journey."

More information: [www.iamroadsmart.com/campaign- ...mpaigns/infotainment](http://www.iamroadsmart.com/campaign-...mpaigns/infotainment)

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