

## Distracted driving- what can we do about it?

Distracted driving is [not something cyclists can live with](#).

Driven by our multi-tasking culture that has deemed our cars are simply 4-wheeled extensions of our work desk, our kitchen table and even entertainment center, distracted driving is unquestionably becoming worse.

Presently the law is \*NOT\* working, as you can sit at \*ANY\* intersection, anywhere, and in very little time see a number of people with phones to their ears. Easy pickings for law enforcement, if they decided to make it a priority. They (CHP anyway) claim it is a priority, but I think otherwise. A 2-officer operation could nab a huge number of offenders. For that matter, why do we have red light cameras but not cell phone cameras? True, they'd have to take a photo of every car, and a real live person would have to cull through them, but it would be a lot easier than having officers handing out tickets.

But given that it's going to take time to change people's attitudes while driving, what can we do in the meantime to avoid becoming a run-down-from-behind statistic? Some of it has to do with where we ride; I suspect that more-dangerous driving conditions are less-likely to see distracted drivers, because driving at those times comes closer to a full-time job. It's when it seems like there's little to do that people will be more-inclined to be stupid behind the wheel. Ironically that means that straighter roads and less-congestion<sup>^</sup> are probably more dangerous to cyclists than we believe. Picture Canada Road vs Kings Mtn. I have yet to see someone yakking or texting on the phone on Kings (although I'm sure it does happen), but see it often on Canada.

I have questions, not answers. Bright flashing tail lights in the daytime. Good thing? Intuitively I think so, but at the same time I've come across a sea of flashing headlights (while riding) and found it distracting, and at some point I think distracting moves from being good (getting noticed) to being bad (taking your attention away from other things you should be seeing). Could just be a matter of how bright that flashing light is. But to effectively engage the attention of a distracted driver, is anything less than a laser pointed straight into their retina going to do the job?

I look forward to a discussion of these points, from two entirely selfish standpoints. First, I'm out there on the road myself. Second, I don't want people to get scared away from cycling because it's bad for business. Sadly, this is too serious a point to warrant having a smiley after it. --Mike--