

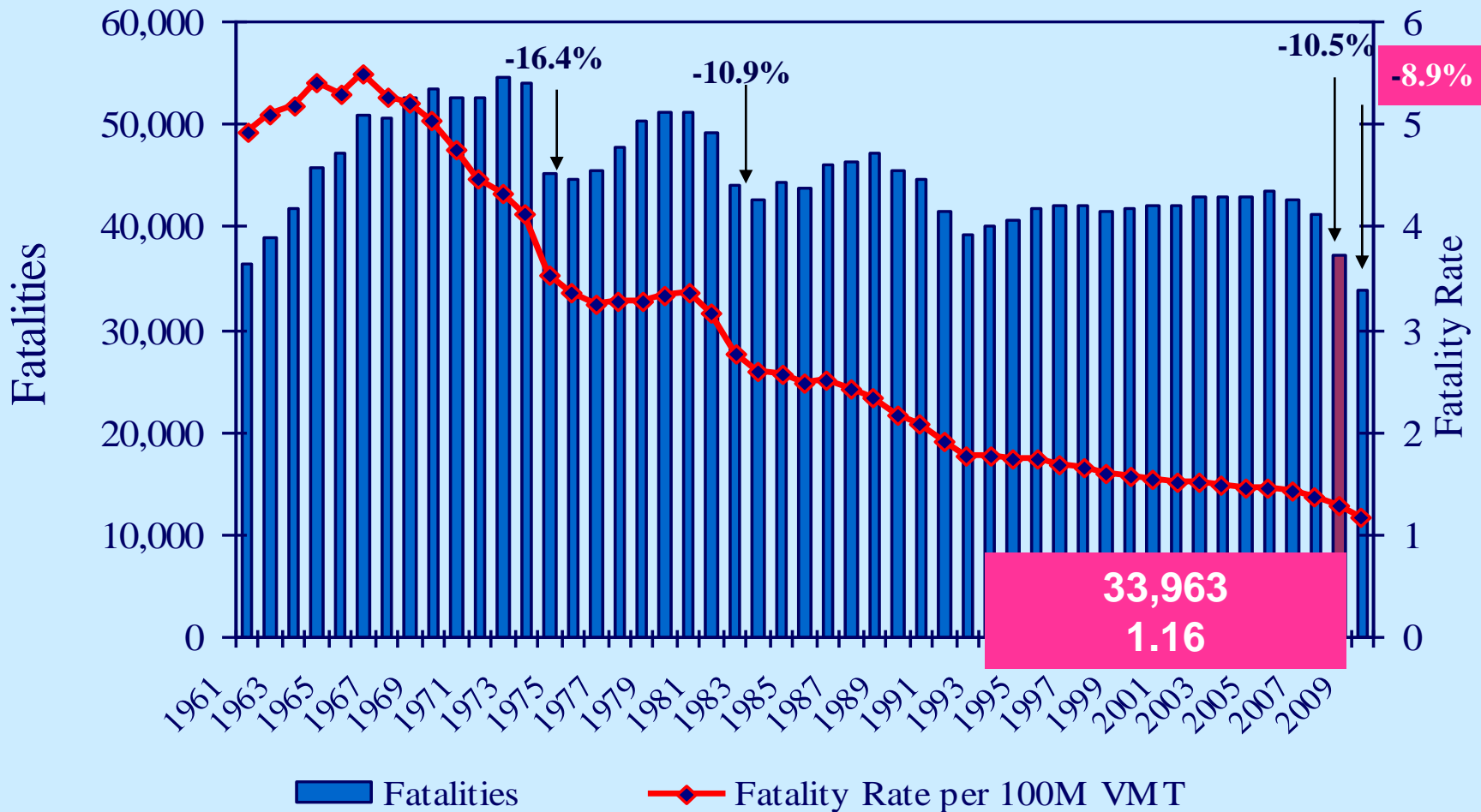
The Road Towards Zero Deaths: Focusing on the Distracted Driver

Joe Toole

Associate Administrator for Safety
Federal Highway Administration



Fatalities and Fatality Rate, by Year



One Death Every 15 minutes



Challenges

- Rural roads:
 - 56% of fatalities are rural – most on 2-lane roads
 - 36% are off the state highway system
 - Sparse rural population density, large road density
 - Data problems magnified in rural areas
- Motorcyclist fatalities – 12%
- Pedestrian/bicycle fatalities



WHAT IS DISTRACTED DRIVING?

It's Using very electronic
difficult devices to near pay
railroad attention tracks to
can two be things extremely
at dangerous once.

Don't text near trains.



CommonSenseUseIt.com



Distraction and Inattention

- ❑ Driver distraction is a diversion of attention away from activities critical for safe driving toward a competing activity
- ❑ Driver inattention represents diminished attention to activities that are critical for safe driving in the absence of a competing activity
- ❑ Two sources of diminished: fatigue or alcohol





Distraction sources

- Driving and non-driving
- Built-in, carried-in, and outside the vehicle
- Passengers—attractions and distractions
- Role of person behind the wheel: driver or mother, boyfriend, diner, worker...





What they said...

What are serious threats to safety on the road?

- Drivers talking on cell phones 58%
- Drivers text messaging or emailing 87%
- Drivers who drink and drive 90%

Drivers believe it is unacceptable for a driver to...

- Talk on handheld cell phone 71%
- Talk on hands-free cell phone 38%
- Send text message or email 95%
- Drive after drinking 99%

What they did...

In the past 30 days:

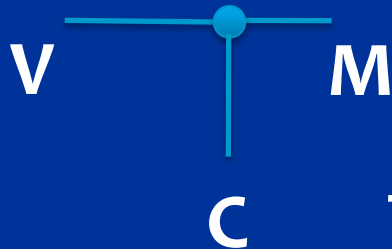
- ▣ Talked on cell phone while driving 67%
- ▣ Read or sent text or email 21%
- ▣ 35 or younger – text messaged 40%

Distraction types

- Visual: eyes off the road
- Manual: hands off wheel
- Cognitive: mind off the road



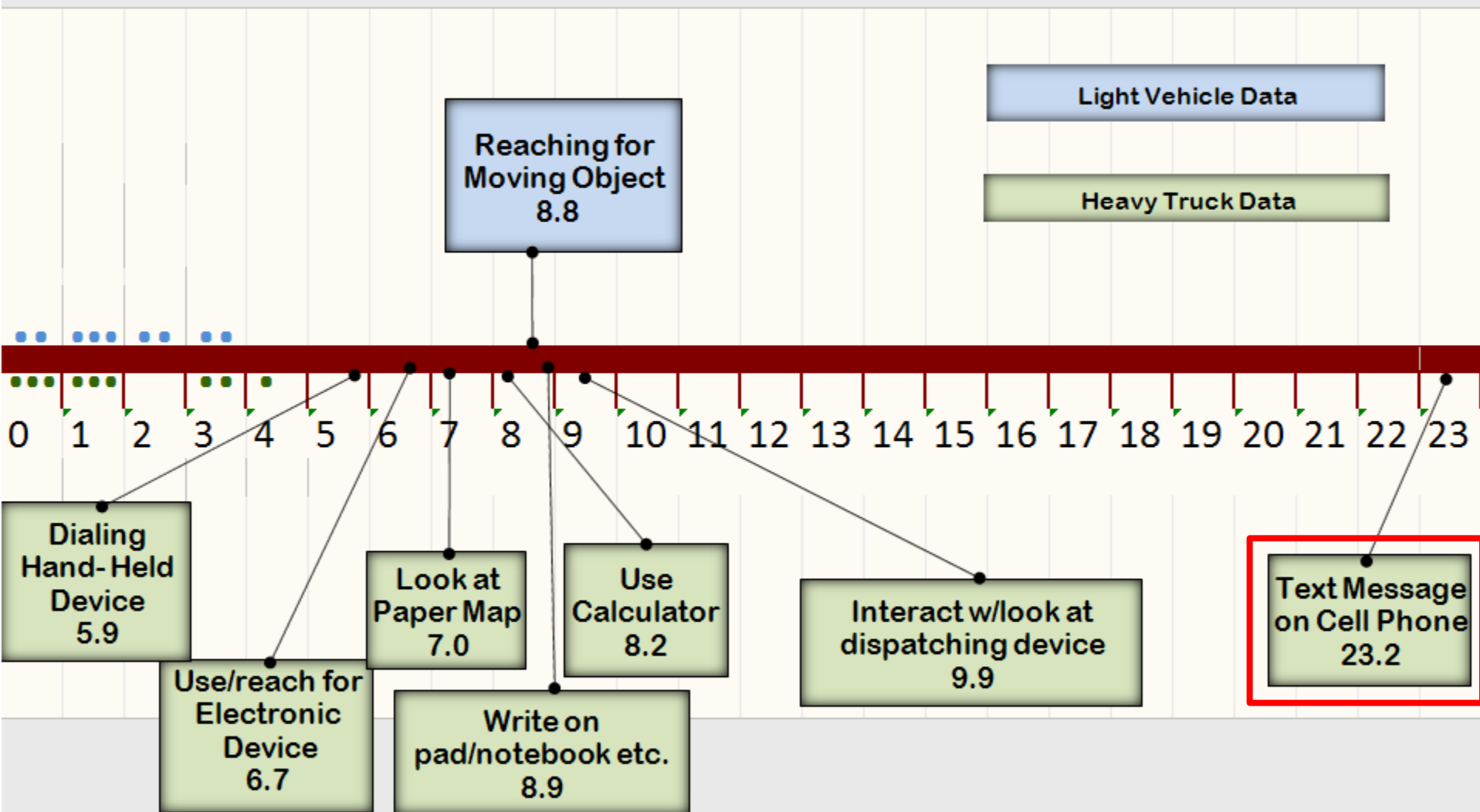
Hands free phone



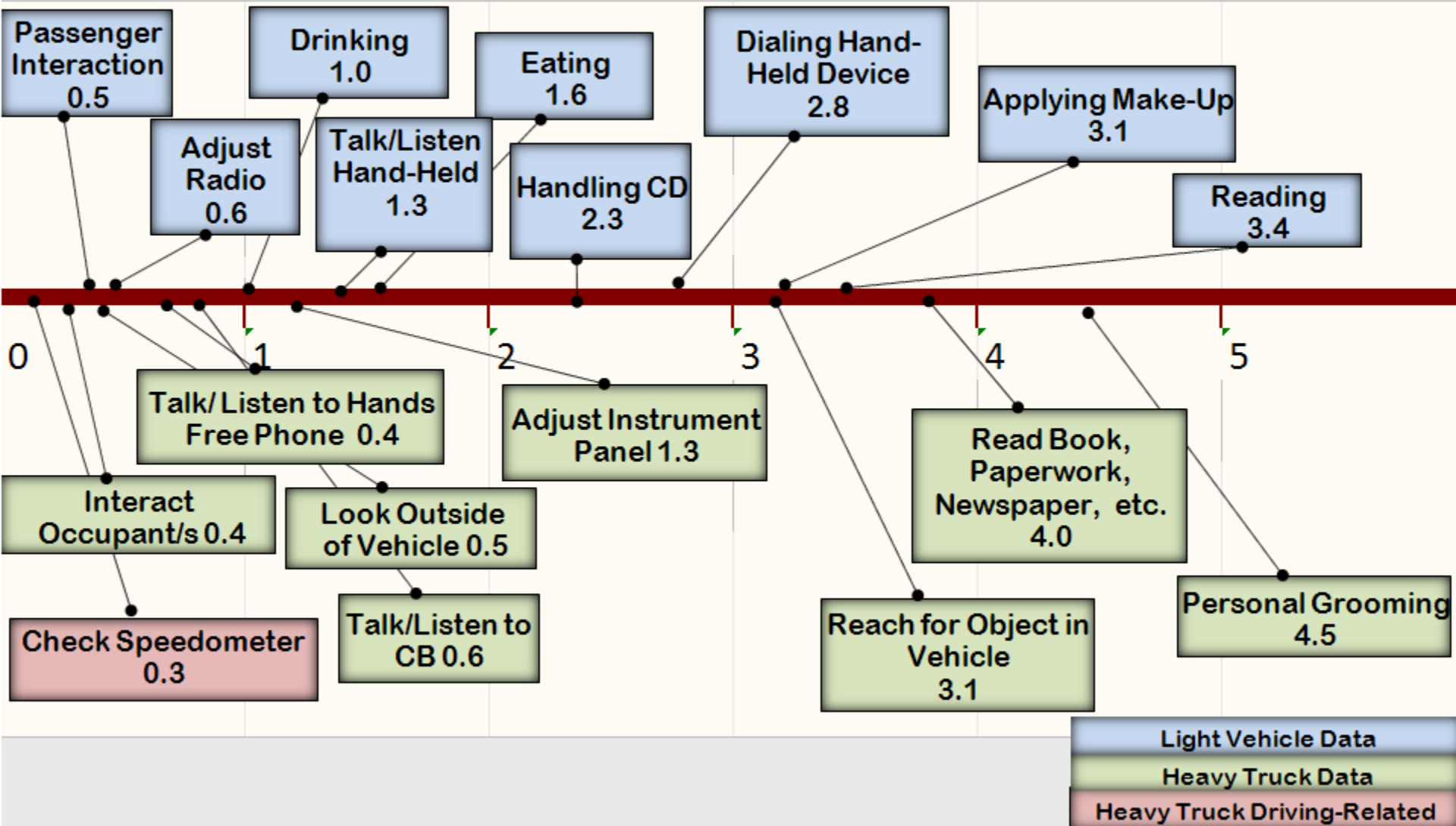
Texting



Non-Driving-Task Related Relative Crash/Near Crash Risk Estimates (Odds Ratio)



Non-Driving-Task Related Relative Crash/Near Crash Risk Estimates (Odds Ratio)



Rules to live by...

Ultimately, the highway is a factor in every highway crash.





- Create a “Forgiving Highway”
- Understand the safety needs
- Just meeting design standards is not enough; look at addressing the needs

Rules to live by...

No one can solve the
problem by themselves.

- It takes Engineering, Enforcement, Education and Emergency Response...working together!
- Strategic Highway Safety Plan
- Crashes occur on every road

Rules to live by...

Follow the data...

Data

- Not just about looking at where crashes have occurred...look at where they are likely to occur in the future.
- Understand the dynamics of the environment you are working in.
- Tools are available to help evaluate alternatives...use them.

Rules to live by...

Every dollar spent on
highways should be a dollar
spent on safety.

Recovery Act Status: Safety

- \$1.3 Billion in safety and operational improvement projects
- 820 projects
- Other project categories (e.g., pavement widening) likely safety
- Safety countermeasures incorporated in many other projects
 - Rumble strips/stripes; cable guardrail; pedestrian
 - Intersection improvements

Safety Countermeasures

■ Rumble strips and rumble stripes

- Over 50% of fatal crashes are a result of roadway departure on rural two-lane highways.
- Estimated to reduce fatal and injury run-off-the-road crashes by 22 percent on these roads
- Centerline rumble strips are estimated to reduce fatal and injury head-on and opposing direction sideswipe by 25 percent.

■ Median cable barrier systems

- Cross-over crashes some of most severe
- Very cost-effective
- Reduce fatal head-on crashes up to 90 percent on rural interstates



Systemic Treatments

Particular countermeasure or set of countermeasures implemented on all roadways or roadway sections where a particular crash type is linked with a particular roadway or traffic element

Your Role is Critical

- **Opportunities** – Look for opportunities in your organization to add value...to improve safety
- **Leadership**- Build the Safety Culture in your organization and your community; be an advocate for viable solutions
- **Fostering Partnerships** - Be the Ideal Partner... look for opportunities to strengthen your partnerships beyond your own area...

