



There is great interest in ways to get people to stop texting while driving, because distracted driving causes hundreds of thousands of car accidents annually in the United States, many of them due to texting drivers. A tech blogger for *The New York Times* recently called it a “huge breakthrough” that PhoneGuard Inc.’s Drive Safe texting prevention app is free.

PhoneGuard’s Drive Safe app for Android and Blackberry smartphones disables a smartphone’s texting capability whenever the phone is in a vehicle moving more than 10 miles an hour. Although there are other apps that provide a similar function, they are not free.

As Bob Tedeschi writes in *The New York Times* blog *Gadgetwise*,

Since the dangers of driving-while-texting became more public, app developers have sought to capitalize on the issue, by selling apps similar to PhoneGuard and then charging a monthly service to use the app. Through a partnership with the Remember Alex Brown Foundation (created by parents of a driving-while-texting victim), PhoneGuard has found a way to offer this potentially lifesaving technology for free...

... If I had kids who were prone to texting while driving, I would immediately load it onto their phone.

The Drive Safe app, which is always on, works by pinging GPS satellites every few seconds to sense when the phone is in a moving vehicle, then disables the texting function. If you attempt to send a text message — or open any other app — while in a moving vehicle, a “No Texting Vehicle” message appears on the phone’s screen.

The app also prevents you from making calls, but does allow you to answer the ones coming in. The app will automatically allow texting and other data functions to resume when the car is stopped for more than five seconds, however. Any missed text messages will be waiting for the user. Once the user starts driving again, the software will automatically block these activities again.

Drive Safe is part of a larger application suite that features other safety components such as a phone locator, speed parameter function, and phone information wipe, in the case of a stolen phone.

Tedeschi, who tested the app for his blog, reports that whoever is the app's administrator has the power to temporarily disable the app if someone wants to text or use other apps while in moving vehicles. He notes that resourceful teens, especially, will delete the app and reinstall it at home, to wiggle out of the app's restrictions without their parents knowing. He says, "As far as I can tell, only close parental vigilance — over the child's Android Market activity, specifically — will prevent this sort of thing from happening."

There have been some complaints that the constant ping of GPS satellites can drain the phone's battery. Tedeschi says that a car charger would solve that problem, and that parents can also help preserve battery strength by remotely disabling the app when their child is away from the phone.

The Boca Raton, FL-based PhoneGuard Inc. is getting the word out about its Drive Safe app to teens and other young people — the largest age group to text while in cars — through an online promotion in which one person who downloads the free app will win Justin Bieber's autographed tour jacket. The 17-year-old Bieber, a two-time Grammy-nominated singer/songwriter and teen heartthrob, is a stockholder in PhoneGuard and is known for urging people not to text while driving.

As Julie Bart writes on *HotHardware*,

While anything to do with Bieber gets a whole lot of attention, most of the kids that love Bieber aren't old enough to drive yet. The comments from some of them on the Android Market are adorable and prove the point: 'I hope and will pray that I have the chance to win his jacket,' wrote one. Another explains, 'I can't drive yet. But downloaded it for mom. I told her to use it for Alex Brown! And she just started to cry, remembering Extreme Makeover.'

To download PhoneGuard, visit <http://www.phoneguard.com/default.aspx>.

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1. [Last-Minute Gift Ideas for Safe Driving | Daniel R. Rosen, P.C.](#) says:
[December 23, 2011 at 6:03 am](#)

[...] as this blog reported back in August, there is also PhoneGuard's free Drive Safe app for Android and Blackberry [...]

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