

# IN-VEHICLE ELECTRONICS AND DRIVER FOCUS

**CEA POSITION:** CEA believes three courses of action should be taken to address concerns over in-vehicle electronics and driver focus: continued research; continued public education campaigns that treat driver distraction comprehensively; and enforcement of existing laws concerning negligent and reckless driving. CEA has developed model legislation which encourages a uniform approach to the regulation of in-vehicle video displays. In addition, in 2005, CEA launched an ongoing “Watch the Road: Drive Smart with Consumer Electronics” education campaign for consumers ([www.digitaldriver.org](http://www.digitaldriver.org)), which offers tips and recommendations for the safe and responsible use of in-vehicle electronics, whether portable or installed.

**BACKGROUND:** More than 60 percent of all households own a vehicle with a CD-based car audio system, while 15 percent of households have a car with a video entertainment system. In addition, 10 percent of all households have a satellite radio device, 12 percent own a navigation system, more than 78 percent of households own a mobile phone, 27 percent own at least one MP3 player and 15 percent own at least one PDA.

**CEA EVALUATION:** While technology can support safety on the road, clear driver focus and proper judgment are paramount. CEA shares concern about misuse of in-car devices, but expansive new laws can be a blunt instrument. The sources of potential driver distraction are innumerable. Laws that seek to target the effect – distracted driving – are a much wiser choice than laws that target individual objects (e.g. mobile phones, children, food, newspapers, make-up). Laws concerning inattentive or reckless driving are already in place, and proper enforcement of such laws would effectively target the problem of distracted drivers.

Consumer electronics offer a number of safety benefits in addition to allowing drivers to immediately access emergency services. Vehicle navigation systems, for example, provide guidance by voice or simple pictogram and keep drivers from having to open and study maps, written directions or street signs. Hands-free phones with voice or one-touch dialing allow drivers to keep their hands on the wheel and eyes on the road. In-vehicle entertainment systems keep children occupied who would otherwise demand the attention of the driver.

**For more information, please contact CEA at [publicpolicy@CE.org](mailto:publicpolicy@CE.org) or visit [www.CE.org/governmentaffairs](http://www.CE.org/governmentaffairs).**