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## Texting Drivers, Yes You! – Put Down Your Phones and Pay

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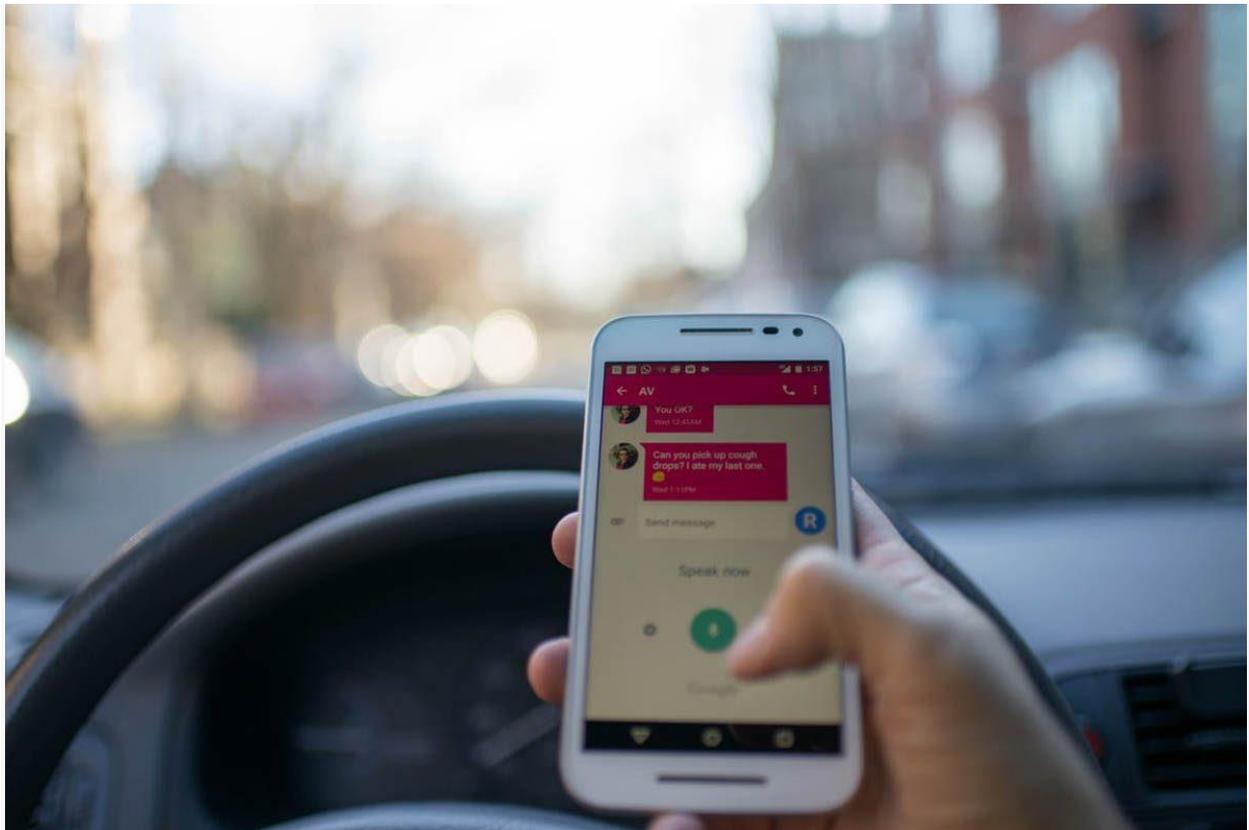
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## Texting Drivers, Yes You! — Put Down Your Phones and Pay Attention

By Roy Lenfest  
UCF Forum columnist  
Wednesday, October 23, 2019



(Photo by Roman Pohorecki at Pexels)

It's 4:15 p.m. and I am sitting in the back of a very long line at the traffic light at University Boulevard and Alafaya Trail in front of UCF. The light has just turned green and the people in the front of the line don't seem to be moving.

The horn honking finally starts, and two cars whose drivers were texting someone more important than all of us behind them, finally go on the stale yellow light, actually running the red light and leaving the rest of us to sit. I can't help but wonder if the texters are the

same people giving lip service to saving the environment and bad-mouthing those who make money from hydrocarbon sales and new automobiles.

So for next two minutes, all 15 or 20 vehicles of us sit and wait for the light to change and give us another chance to go home. Meanwhile we are all sitting and baking in the heat (my air conditioner isn't working now) with our engines running, burning gas and oil, polluting the air, enlarging the holes in our environment and undoubtedly increasing our blood pressure.

Then the feeling begins, like someone has their hand in my pocket and is fishing around trying to find a quarter. The invisible pickpocket!

My van is old but still has fewer miles than you might think from looking at it. It was made back in the day when 20 mpg was considered to be good mileage. Now it burns about 15 gallons every five hours when running and that is about three gallons an hour, or one gallon every 20 minutes. So in the two minutes I am baking, this comes up to 1/10 of a gallon while waiting for the most important, world-shaking text I never got! At \$2.50 a gallon, that is 25 cents taken from me and the two minutes of my life I could have been doing something more productive and enjoyable.

“How do you justify that you are so much more equal than everyone behind you at the light?”

So in this day and age of education, enlightenment, equality and entitlement, how do you justify that you are so much more equal than everyone behind you at the light?

In this case, at the east end of University Boulevard, there are often more than 15 cars stacked up in one lane approaching Alafaya Trail. So all it takes is one inconsiderate texting person to take a combined total of a half hour and as much as \$3.75 from all of those strangers behind them. More if it is really busy, and if there are more cars that may have passengers.

At some of the bigger intersections near the university, I have sat through as many as four complete light cycles during rush hour. Using gas while waiting to take your turn is a part of life, but having someone else decide for you that their text is more important than your dwindling time and money is beyond frustrating and unfair – it is totally inconsiderate.

So while the rest of us are lobbying for larger penalties to get your attention back on driving and off of your cell phone, don't expect the incidence of road rage and traffic homicides to go down. That won't happen until you look up and see the light for yourself. It may even take the hand of the judicial system in your own pocket looking for money for you to come around.

Life and history have a way of repeating themselves in a circular fashion, so the next time while you are at a traffic light, you may find that someone in front of you is putting their hand in your pocket.

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