

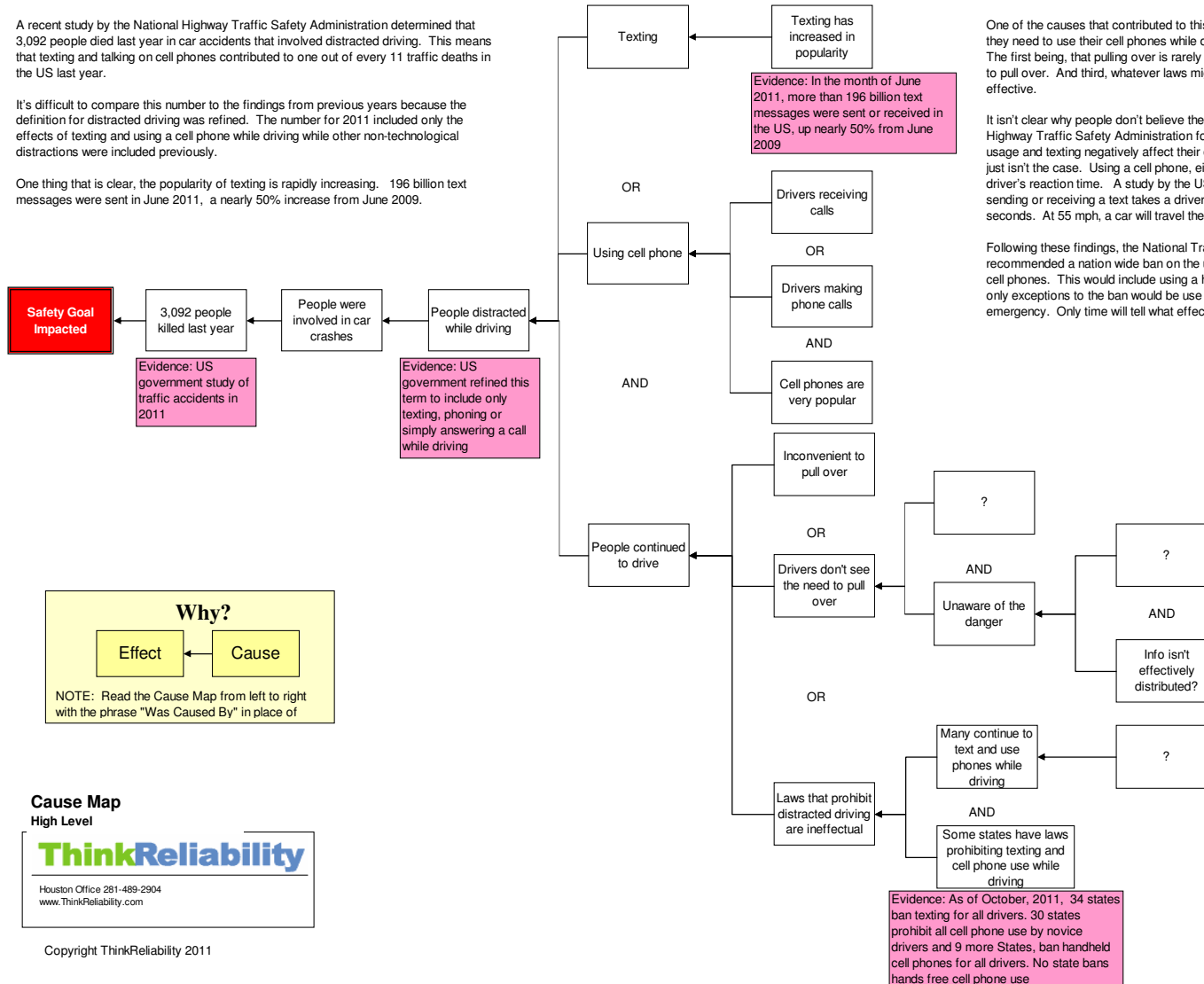
Deaths Result from Texting and Using Phone While Driving

USA
2010

A recent study by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration determined that 3,092 people died last year in car accidents that involved distracted driving. This means that texting and talking on cell phones contributed to one out of every 11 traffic deaths in the US last year.

It's difficult to compare this number to the findings from previous years because the definition for distracted driving was refined. The number for 2011 included only the effects of texting and using a cell phone while driving while other non-technological distractions were included previously.

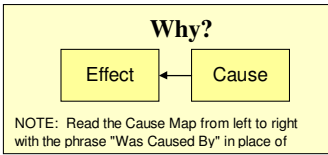
One thing that is clear, the popularity of texting is rapidly increasing. 196 billion text messages were sent in June 2011, a nearly 50% increase from June 2009.



One of the causes that contributed to this problem is that people aren't pulling over when they need to use their cell phones while driving. There are a number of reasons for this. The first being, that pulling over is rarely convenient. Second, people don't see the need to pull over. And third, whatever laws might be in place prohibiting distracted driving aren't effective.

It isn't clear why people don't believe they need to pull over. The study by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration found that many people don't think that cell phone usage and texting negatively affect their driving skills. Many studies have determined that just isn't the case. Using a cell phone, either to talk or to text while driving will slow down a driver's reaction time. A study by the US Department of Transportation found that sending or receiving a text takes a driver's eyes off the road for an average of 4.6 seconds. At 55 mph, a car will travel the length of a football field in that time.

Following these findings, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has recommended a nation wide ban on the use of all portable electronic devices, including cell phones. This would include using a hands-free device to operate a cell phone. The only exceptions to the ban would be use of GPS systems and cell phone use in case of emergency. Only time will tell what effect the NTSB recommendation has future laws.



Cause Map
High Level

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