



## DOT study finds digital billboards don't distract drivers

By Keith Laing - 01/07/14 02:57 PM EST

Drivers are not distracted by digital billboards alongside roads, according to a study conducted by the Department of Transportation (DOT).

The study, which was released by the Federal Highway Administration (FHA), found that drivers are not any more likely to be distracted by digital billboards than stationary signs.

"On average, the drivers in this study devoted between 73 and 85 percent of their visual attention to the road ahead for both [Commercial Electronic Variable Message Signs] and standard billboards," the study said. "This range is consistent with earlier field research studies. In the present study, the presence of CEVMS did not appear to be related to a decrease in looking toward the road ahead."

The study surveyed drivers in Richmond, Va. and Reading, Pa. and found that the average length of time drivers spent looking at digital billboards was 379 milliseconds, compared to 335 milliseconds for standard signs.

The results were both well below the "currently accepted threshold of 2,000 milliseconds," the study said.

"The results did not provide evidence indicating that CEVMS, as deployed and tested in the two selected cities, were associated with unacceptably long glances away from the road," the study said. "When dwell times longer than the currently accepted threshold of 2,000 [milliseconds] occurred, the road ahead was still in the driver's field of view. This was the case for both CEVMS and standard billboards."

The results were cheered by the Washington, D.C.-based Outdoor Advertising Association of America (OAAA), which has pushed the transportation department to relax its rules regarding digital billboards.

"Studies have long shown that digital billboards do not cause distracted driving," the outdoor advertising agency said in a statement. "The new federal study released on Dec. 30 comes to the same conclusion."

**TAGS: Billboards, Digital billboard, Advertising**

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