

— Distracted Driving

April is distracted driving awareness month

According to the National Safety Council, there were over 40,000 deaths resulting from motor vehicle accidents in 2016 and 2017. One of the biggest contributing factors was found to be distracted driving. Roughly 26% of all fatalities are the result of some form of distraction, preventing the driver from identifying potential hazards while behind the wheel.

THE HARD TRUTH

According to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA), the age group with the greatest proportion of distracted drivers is the under 20 age group – 16% of all drivers younger than 20 involved in fatal crashes were reported to have been distracted while driving. Of those drivers involved in fatal crashes who were reportedly distracted, the 30- to 39-year old age group had the highest proportion of cell phone involvement.

The truth is, no matter the age bracket - whether at home or at work - distracted driving prevents people from going home in the same condition they left in. **DON'T TAKE THE RISK!**



WHAT IS DISTRACTED DRIVING?

Distracted driving is ANY activity that diverts attention away from driving the vehicle. It includes:

- Talking or texting
- Eating and drinking
- Talking to people in your vehicle
- Stereo, navigation, or entertainment
- Anything else that takes your attention away from driving!!

Breaking Down Distracted Driving

Scientists have identified the types of distractions that occur while driving and placed them into three main categories:

1. Visual

Anything that pulls your eyes away from driving duties, such as your cell phone, navigation, looking in sun visor mirror, stereo, passengers, etc.

2. Manual

Anything that requires the use of your hands and requires you to remove them from the steering wheel such as eating or drinking, reaching for items, etc.

3. Cognitive

Anything that takes your mind off the task of operating your motor vehicle, such as hands-free devices, thinking about things other than driving, stress, illness, and daydreaming are just a few examples of cognitive distractions.

The National Highway Safety Administration (NHTSA) has planned a number of activities in April and are kicking off their enforcement campaign **U DRIVE. U TEXT. U PAY.**



Resources and campaign materials are available at: <https://www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov/get-materials/distracted-driving/u-drive-u-text-u-pay>



SAFETY COMMUNICATION

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WORKERS AND DISTRACTED DRIVING

Distracted driving has had a dramatic impact on those whose job duties require the use of a motor vehicle. Believe it or not, you are more likely to be killed during a motor vehicle accident while on the job than you are of any other occupational hazard that exists today!

Many employers are taking proactive steps that prevent the use of cell phones and other handheld devices while operating agency vehicles. Some are even installing technology to further prevent or deter distracted driving, such as cameras monitoring employees during vehicle operation, devices that detect sudden changes in speed, direction, and braking that also could be related to distracted driving.

WHAT CAN I DO TO PREVENT DISTRACTED DRIVING?

Turn your cell phone off and place it out of sight and reach!

Resources

- <https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/distracted-driving>
- <http://www.nsc.org/learn/NSC-Initiatives/Pages/distracted-driving.aspx>

Set Essential Controls

Before you back out of your parking spot, queue up the playlist you want to hear, set climate controls to a comfortable level, and program any destinations into your GPS.

Review Your Route

When you're headed for an unfamiliar destination, review your directions and study your route ahead of time. Use Google Map's Street View to get a 3D look at your destination, so you'll have a mental picture to help you find your address.

Manage Your Time

Rushing tends to promote distraction, road rage, and taking unnecessary risks. Whenever possible, leave a few minutes early so you can arrive at your destination stress free.

Prep at Home

Get ready for work before getting in your car. Shaving and putting on deodorant or makeup are much easier and safer when done in your own bathroom.

Battle Complacency

Complacency is something we must battle on a daily basis. Driving the same routes, doing the same activities, give drivers a false sense of safety that makes us less aware of the hazards and potential outcomes that are merely a few seconds or a couple feet away every time we are behind the wheel.

