

Distracted Driving Awareness

April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month, focusing on reducing fatalities caused by distracted driving. Distracted driving has become a deadly epidemic on our roads. For 2025, preliminary estimates from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration suggest that approximately 3,240 people were killed in distraction-affected crashes.

Distracted driving includes any activity that takes eyes, hands, or attention off the road, including eating, grooming, adjusting in-car screens or daydreaming. A very common distraction for drivers is sending or reading a text, which takes your eyes off the road for about 5 seconds. At 55 mph, that's like driving the length of a football field blindfolded.

April is also National Work Zone Awareness week, and as we focus on the danger to our folks working on the roadway across the state, the impact of distracted driving on work zone crashes is significant. Distracted driving is the leading factor in all work zone crashes (41%), work zone fatalities (67%) and injuries (55%).

Hands-free cell phone conversations are only slightly less distracting than a conversation with a hand-held device, so hands-free is not the solution to eliminating distraction by cell phones while driving.

Key Safety Tips for Drivers

- Put it Away: Store phones in the glove box, back seat, or trunk.
- Use "Do Not Disturb": Activate this mode on your phone before starting the car.
- Plan Ahead: Set your GPS, music playlists, and mirrors before driving.
- Pull Over: If a call or text is urgent, park in a safe location to respond.
- Ask Passengers for Help: Designate a passenger to handle phone calls or messages.