



Transportation Times

Safety Consulting

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Distracted Driving



These days, people are bombarded with devices that can help accomplish more in less time. With people spending an average of about one hour and 15 minutes in their vehicles every day, unfortunately, other activities—from talking to the kids to eating dinner—often take place behind the wheel. Experts estimate that drivers are doing something potentially distracting more than 15 percent of the time their vehicles are in motion.

So little time, so many multi-taskers. If you're driving your vehicle, you are already multitasking. At a minimum you are: operating a piece of heavy machinery at high speed; navigating across changing terrain; calculating speeds and distances; and responding to all the other drivers and obstacles around you. Putting one more activity in the mix—even talking to your passengers or changing a radio station—can be enough to make you lose control of your vehicle or fail to respond in an emergency.

How do you know when you are distracted? Consider how many of these things have happened to you:

- A passenger in your car screamed or gasped because of something you did or didn't do.
- You ran a stop sign or red light unintentionally.
- You swerved to avoid an animal, a car, or another highway hazard.
- You slammed on your brakes because you didn't see the car in front of you stop.
- You didn't remember driving from one place to another.
- You drifted in your lane or into another lane of traffic.

Here are some suggestions to help you manage distractions safely:

- If the newspaper, business report, or day planner is too great a temptation, stick it in the trunk of the car until you arrive at your destination.
- Secure everyone and everything that could be a distraction.
- Don't wait until you're driving to plan your route or to attend to personal grooming; do that before you go. Leave a little earlier—you'll be less stressed.
- Pre-set the climate control, radio, CD player, iPod, and any other device you now use.
- Postpone complex or emotional conversations on a cell phone or with your passengers until you arrive at your destination.
- When you're hungry or thirsty, take a break.

The next time you catch yourself slamming on the brakes to avoid hitting something or someone, you know what to do. Recognize that you may be driving distracted. Use some common sense and help keep our roads safer for everyone.

Source: Naval Safety Center and AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety

Gauging your distractions—New studies show that drivers overestimate their ability to multitask behind the wheel. The New York Times has developed a game to measure your reaction time and how it is affected by external distractions. Regardless of your results, experts say, you should not attempt to text when driving.

To try the game go to: <http://www.nytimes.com//interactive/2009/07/19/technology/20090719-driving-game.html>



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"It's All About You"

Potential for deer crashes will be high this season



In coming weeks, deer will be plentiful and their movements unpredictable along Wisconsin roadways. To avoid adding to the seasonal spike in traffic crashes involving deer, drivers will need to be extremely cautious and vigilant, Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) officials warn.

During their mating season in October and November, deer will be more active especially at dusk and dawn when they move to and from their bedding and feeding areas. As a result, more deer will be darting onto highways this time of year.

Deer are the third most commonly struck object in Wisconsin traffic crashes (behind collisions with another vehicle or a fixed object). Law enforcement agencies reported a total of 15,821 deer vs. vehicle crashes last year. Dane County had the most motor vehicle vs. deer crashes reported in 2008 with 837. Waukesha County had the second most with 683 followed by Shawano and St. Croix counties each with 575. In Green Lake County, more than half of all reported crashes in 2008 involved deer.

"To avoid deer crashes, drivers must slow down when they see deer in the area. If you see one deer, there are probably more nearby that could dash in front of your vehicle," says Dennis Hughes, chief of safety programs for WisDOT's Bureau of Transportation Safety. "If you can't avoid a deer, it's safer to hit the brakes and hit the deer than to swerve suddenly and try to miss it. If you swerve, you risk losing control of your vehicle and rolling over or hitting another car or a fixed object, like a tree."

Hughes emphasizes that motorcyclists must be especially careful this time of year because collisions with deer can be fatal. Motorcycles were involved in seven of the 10 fatal deer-vehicle crashes in Wisconsin in 2008.

The WisDOT Bureau of Transportation Safety offers the following advice for avoiding collisions with deer:

- Be on the lookout for deer, eliminate distractions while driving, and slow down in early morning and evening hours—the most active time for deer.
- Always wear your safety belt—there are fewer and less severe injuries in vehicle-deer crashes when safety belts are worn.
- If you see a deer by the side of the road, slow down and blow your horn with one long blast to frighten the deer away.
- When you see one deer, look for another one—deer seldom run alone.
- If you see a deer looming in your headlights, don't expect the deer to move away—headlights can confuse a deer and cause the animal to freeze.
- Brake firmly when you notice a deer in or near your path.
- Do not swerve—it can confuse the deer as to where to run—and cause you to lose control and hit a tree or another car.
- The one exception to the "don't swerve" advice applies to motorcyclists. On a motorcycle, you should slow down, brake firmly and then swerve if necessary to avoid hitting the deer. If you must swerve, always try to stay within your lane to avoid hitting other objects.
- If you hit a deer, get your vehicle off the road if possible, and then call a law enforcement agency. Walking on a highway is dangerous, so stay in your vehicle if you can.
- Don't try to move the animal if it is still alive. The injured deer could hurt you.

Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation

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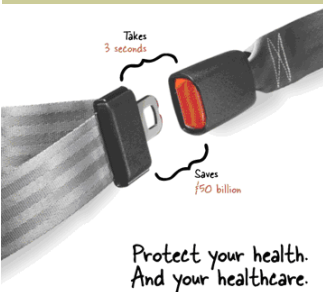
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Let us know...

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions about the safety newsletter please let us know, we'd love to hear from you!!

"It's All About You"

CSA 2010 BEGINS IMPLEMENTATION

The new Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) national safety initiative for commercial motor vehicles, Comprehensive Safety Analysis 2010 (CSA 2010), completed its testing phase and is now getting ready to launch the program nationwide.

CSA 2010 is a compliance and inspection program designed to improve safety and reduce crashes, injuries and fatalities on our nation's roadways. The program replaces SafeStat with a new Safety Measurement System (SMS) to identify unsafe behaviors in drivers and spot carriers considered to be high-crash risks.

The target date for CSA 2010 to be in place and fully implemented throughout the United States is December, 2010.

To learn more about CSA 2010, go to: <http://csa2010.fmcsa.dot.gov/>

Cell Phone Safety Tips

- Try to place calls while your vehicle is stationary.
- Use a "hands-free" or speaker phone accessory (these are available for most if not all hand-held cell phones).
- Never read or write text messages while driving. Taking your eyes off the road for a second or two can result in a collision. Pull over to the side of the road if you must text.
- Program frequently called numbers into your phone's memory allowing you to keep dialing to a minimum.
- If you must dial when the car is moving, hold the phone at eye level so you will have a clear view of the road.
- Do not make emotional phone calls while driving (quitting your job, breaking up with a boyfriend or girlfriend, etc.) as you will be focused primarily on the call rather than your driving.
- Never read or write while the car is moving. If you must write a note or take down a phone number during a conversation, **PULL OVER!**
- Make sure your phone is within easy reach while driving.
- Be careful when pulling over to place calls. To avoid being a crime victim, do not stop in dangerous areas and keep your car doors locked..

Did you know?

- Every 12 minutes someone dies in a motor vehicle crash
- Every 5 seconds a crash occurs
- Motor vehicle crashes cost employers \$60 billion annually in medical care, legal expenses, property damage, and lost productivity.
- The average crash costs an employer \$16,500. When a worker has an on-the-job crash that results in an injury, the cost to their employer is \$74,000. Costs can exceed \$500,000 when a fatality is involved.
- A major reason for increased traffic congestion is that our highway system has not kept pace with the growing demands placed on it. Since 1970, the number of drivers increased by 64% while the roadway system increased by only 6%

Important Dates to Remember

Drive Safely Work Week, October 5-9, 2009

Operation Safe Driver, October 18-24, 2009