



Title: **Distracted driving kills; be fully engaged when behind the wheel**
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Distracted driving kills; be fully engaged when behind the wheel

To the editor:

An alarming number of Illinois State Police officers have been struck by motorists this year. Three have died. Knowing these crashes were preventable makes the statistics even more disturbing.

The Illinois Insurance Association and its member companies urge drivers to protect emergency responders by following traffic laws, avoiding distractions, and never driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Illinois' rules of the road require drivers to yield, slow down, and if possible, change lanes when emergency vehicles are stopped along the

roadside. Obey Scott's Law and give first responders room to do their jobs!

Distracted driving is a pervasive issue that contributes to thousands of injuries and deaths each year. The IIA encourages motorists to drive fully focused in support of National Distracted Driving Awareness Month. Anything that takes the driver's eyes off the roadway, hands off the steering wheel or thoughts off the task at hand is a driving distraction.

Commit to not using your cell-phone while in the driver's seat. Adjust seat position, radio, temperature control and navigational system before leaving the driveway. Confirm all passengers are properly buckled. Pets should be inside a crate. Organize food, drinks, tolls and other items you might need to access during the trip.

Fully engaged motorists are ready to react when unexpected weather, traffic or roadway situations arise. Make safe driving your top priority. Everything else can wait. Let's all do our part to protect first responders and improve Illinois' highway crash statistics.

Kevin J. Martin, Springfield

Note to readers: Kevin J. Martin is executive director of the Illinois Insurance Association.