

# OPINION



“The Journal paper was always my friend...”

— A. Lincoln, June 18, 1864

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control. Traffic, weather, other drivers — all affect whether you arrive safely. All you can do is react to them as best you can.

But there are other risks motorists can take control of and eliminate. You have choices, and one of the most important is to focus on the road and ignore distractions competing for your attention.

The Illinois Insurance Association is partnering with law enforcement and community leaders in April to observe Distracted Driving Month. We know the devastating consequences of driving while distracted: 3,744 lives lost and 391,000 injuries in 2015 alone were attributed to crashes caused by distracted driving.

You drive the length of a football field without looking at the road or the cars around you when you read or type an average text. But texting

isn't the only dangerous distraction.

Eating, adjusting the radio, setting your GPS or talking to passengers can also impair your focus. A Texas A&M study found that voice-to-text is not significantly safer than manual texting, and AAA's foundation for Traffic Safety found that reaction times slow and brain function is compromised when drivers use hands-free technologies.

The bottom line is the only job that matters when you're driving is to get to your destination safely. Everything else can wait.

Decreasing the death toll will require greater public awareness and consistent law enforcement. We also know the best line of defense is the good choices drivers make every day.

**Kevin Martin**  
Executive Director, Illinois Insurance Association

### se **Avoid driving distracted**

y Every time you get behind the wheel, you're about to encounter potential dangers over which you have no