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CONTRIBUTED

Illinois Insurance Association Observes Distracted Driving Month

Janet Patrick Apr 18, 2017

This April, the Illinois Insurance Association (IIA) announces it is joining with its member insurance companies, law enforcement and community leaders to spread the word about the dangers of distracted driving. April is Distracted Driving Month, and IIA and its partners will step up the effort to equip drivers with facts and life-saving tips.

"The Illinois Insurance Association and its members are committed to making our state's roadways safer for everyone by educating drivers about dangerous distractions and their deadly consequences," said Kevin Martin, IIA Executive Director. "We believe an effective fight against distracted driving includes public awareness, legal enforcement and good choices made by ordinary drivers every day."

IIA is also working with AAA and the Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police to pass a resolution declaring April 24-28 Distracted Driving Week in Illinois.

Distracted driving – engaging in any activity that takes a driver's attention away from driving – claims thousands of lives each year and injures hundreds of thousands more:

- 3,744 deaths attributed to distracted driving in the U.S. in 2015
- 391,000 injuries in 2015 due to crashes that involved distracted driving

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Distracted driving can include texting but also eating, adjusting the radio or GPS, talking on a hand-held phone, talking with passengers in the car or anything else that takes the driver's eyes or focus off the road.

Cell phones are a particular concern because of their prevalence on the road; each day, approximately 660,000 Americans use them while driving, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Sending or reading an average text takes a driver's eyes off the road for five seconds; at highway speeds, that's the equivalent of driving the length of a football field or longer without looking up.

"A wide variety of technologies and demands compete for drivers' attention," said Martin. "IIA's message is that when you're driving, getting to your destination safely is the only job you have that matters. We are proud to work with law enforcement and our other community partners to get that message to the public."

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