



Title: **April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month**  
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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### **April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month**

Traffic is light on Illinois roadways right now, but this will change when the pandemic passes. April is "Distracted Driving Awareness Month," a time when motorists are encouraged to reflect on driving habits.

Distractions contribute to thousands of vehicle accidents every year. The possibility of a behind-the-wheel mistake increases whenever a driver loses focus. Some situations are resolved trouble-free. Others end in serious, sometimes fatal, crashes.

Minimizing driving distractions is a conscious decision. The Illinois Insurance Association and its member companies encourage motorists to recognize the dangers of distracted driving, take deliberate steps to reduce risk and encourage others to do the same.

Start with the cellphone. Enable the auto response text feature to forward incoming calls to voice mail when driving. Better yet, silence or turn off your cellphone in the car.

Commit to being fully focused and rested each time you get behind the wheel.

Conversing with or attending to passengers can be distracting. Enlist their help to scan the roadway and tweak controls. Pull over rather than reaching into the backseat to tend to little ones. Crate pets for transportation.

Reduce distractions inside the vehicle by adjusting music, temperature controls, mirrors, seat positions and mapping devices before putting the car in gear. Be familiar with the in-vehicle infotainment system and driver assist technologies so your eyes stay on the road ahead.

Construction, scenery, billboards and accident sites also cause motorists to lose concentration. Keep eyes looking forward.

Let's make Illinois roadways safe. Stop driving distracted.

**Janet Patrick**, Illinois Insurance Association