



Title: **Protect yourself against distracted driving**
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Protect yourself against distracted driving

Distractions contribute to hundreds of vehicle crashes each year, resulting in property damage, personal injury, even death. The Illinois Insurance Association and its member companies unite with local and state officials to bring attention to this pervasive issue during “Distracted Driving Awareness Month.”

Almost everyone has a mobile device these days and feels compelled to check messages regularly. Cell phones alone top driving distraction, but there are others. Looking at something or someone inside or outside the vehicle causes drivers to take their eyes off the road. Manual distractions like changing the radio station, adjusting temperature controls, eating, and drinking take hands off the steering wheel. Day-dreaming and conversing with passengers take thoughts off the task at hand.

Distractions are impossible to eliminate, but drivers can minimize them by implementing the following strategies.

- Always buckle children and crate pets for travel.
- Adjust climate control, seat position, mirrors, music, and mapping before putting the car in gear.
- Secure loose gear to avoid reaching for anything.
- Be well-rested, alert, and ready to respond to hazards, deteriorating conditions, and nearby vehicles.
- Follow Illinois’ distracted driving laws. Handheld cellphones for talking or texting and other electronic communications are prohibited en route.

Distracted driving jeopardizes personal safety and makes roadways dangerous. Keep eyes on the road; hands on the steering wheel; and thoughts on driving. Multi-tasking behind the wheel is never a good idea. Make a conscious decision to curtail driving distractions every time you slide into the driver’s seat.

Kevin J. Martin, Executive Director,
 Illinois Insurance Association,
 Springfield