



Title: **Distractions contribute to hundreds of vehicle crashes**  
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### LETTERS

#### Distractions contribute to hundreds of vehicle crashes

To the Editor:

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. Cellphones are a 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, such as changing the radio station, adjusting temperature controls, eating and drinking, take hands off the steering wheel. Daydreaming 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 to a destination.

Distracted driving jeopardizes personal safety and makes roadways dangerous. Keep eyes on the road, hands on the steering wheel and thoughts on driving. Multitasking 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