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VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month

Losing focus behind the steering wheel contributes to thousands of crashes each year. These incidents cause property damage, injury, and sometimes death.

April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month, a national campaign to bring attention to this serious, pervasive problem. The Illinois Insurance Association and its member companies encourage drivers to minimize distractions whenever possible.

Cell phones are an obvious distraction, but there are countless others. Visual distractions include road signs, billboards, crash scenes, construction zones, landscape vistas, and mapping technology. Examples of manual distractions are eating, drinking, adjusting controls, reaching for an object, or grooming behind the steering wheel. Any activity that causes the driver to lose concentration is a cognitive distraction.

Most vehicles are equipped with hands-free cell phone technology these days. Still, this advancement does not eliminate visual, manual, and cognitive distractions inherent in cell phone use. Set up an auto-response to let callers know you cannot talk while driving. Never text, email, or record video behind the steering wheel.

Adjust mapping, temperature controls, music selection, and mirrors before leaving home. Insist that all passengers wear seat belts. Securely strap children into car seats. Crate pets for transportation. Avoid eating, drinking, grooming, and smoking while driving.

Your driving habits directly impact traffic safety. Keep eyes on the road, hands on the wheel, and focus on driving in April — and throughout the year.

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