



LOUISIANA HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMISSION NEWS RELEASE

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“If you’re driving, just drive; everything else can wait.”

Many people do it, but few admit it.

That’s why the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission is observing National Distracted Driving Awareness Month this April, to remind drivers that anything that takes your mind off driving is a distraction.

“The big no-no is texting and social networking while driving, because these activities require visual, manual and cognitive attention,” LHSC Executive Director Lisa Freeman said. “There is no such thing as multi-tasking, so it really is impossible to safely operate a motor vehicle while looking at our phones and typing a message. If you’re driving, just drive; everything else can wait.”

Cell phones are an obvious driving distraction, but there are dozens of other visual, spoken, audio, manual and mental tasks that can impact a driver’s effectiveness.

“Research shows that drivers are distracted by almost anything,” said Dr. Helmut Schneider, executive director of the Center for Analytics and Research in Transportation Safety at LSU.

Crash reports from 2019 show that 187 people in Louisiana were killed in crashes involving a distracted or inattentive driver, Schneider said. That represents more than one-fourth of all drivers, passengers and pedestrians killed in crashes in Louisiana in 2019, according to CARTS data.

Here are some tips from AAA to stay focused on the road:

- Fully focus on driving; actively scan the road, use your mirrors and watch out for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Store loose gear, possessions and other distractions that could roll around in the car, so you are not tempted to reach for them.
- Address vehicle systems like your GPS, seats, mirrors, climate controls and sound systems before hitting the road.
- Don’t use cell phones while driving – handheld or hands-free – except in absolute emergencies.
- If another activity demands your attention, safely pull off the road and stop your vehicle in a safe place.

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