**LOUISIANA HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMISSION NEWS RELEASE**
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## LHSC has two words for drivers: Just Drive

**April 5, 2022** – The head of the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission has a two-word message for drivers as the agency recognizes April as Distracted Driving Awareness Month: Just Drive.

"When you're driving a motor vehicle, your only job is to drive," LHSC Executive Director Lisa Freeman said. "Driving should have nothing to do with a cell phone, a radio, a conversation with a passenger, or a colorful billboard. Just Drive. Nothing more and nothing less."

Each year, distracted driving in Louisiana kills dozens of people, injures thousands more, and costs our communities hundreds of millions of dollars in property damage, loss of productivity, and medical and legal costs, according to federal and state highway safety data.

"In 2020, 180 were people were killed and more than 4,000 people were injured in Louisiana because of distracted or inattentive drivers," Freeman said. "Cell phones are a part of it, but they are not the only thing. Anything, inside or outside of the car, that takes a driver's attention away from driving is a distraction and a potential danger."

Distracted driving is considered an under-reported cause of vehicle crashes, Freeman said, because the distracted driver often must confirm to law enforcement that a distraction was the cause of a crash. Highway safety statistics, which are based on law enforcement reports, probably are under-estimating the extent of the problem, she said.

In addition to 180 fatalities and 4,289 injuries in 2020, distracted drivers also were responsible for 9,198 crashes that caused only property damage in Louisiana, according to the Center for Analytics and Research in Transportation Safety at LSU.

"Behind the statistics is the grim reality of the human cost of crashes," Freeman said. "It is simultaneously heartbreaking and infuriating that these tragedies could have been prevented if the drivers had just paid attention to driving."




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