



## LOUISIANA HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMISSION NEWS RELEASE

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### 2 in '22 – Two resolutions for a safer Louisiana in 2022

If Louisiana drivers would resolve to do just two things in 2022, the state would see a dramatic decrease in injuries and deaths from motor vehicle crashes, according to the state's top highway safety official.

In 2020, crashes killed 828 people and injured more than 64,000 people, “and nearly all of those deaths and injuries could have been prevented if someone had practiced safe driving,” said Lisa Freeman, executive director of the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission. “If we resolve to do these two simple things, what better way to say hello to a new year than to keep ourselves, our loved ones, and others safe on the road?”

The first resolution is to always wear a seat belt, regardless of how long or short the trip is and regardless of which seat you are in.

“Some people are under the impression that you don’t have to buckle up if you’re in the back seat,” Freeman said. “If you’re in a vehicle that is moving, the seat belt law applies to you, but more importantly, that seat belt is a life-saver. Every day, it is the most important thing you can do to keep yourself safe.”

State and national studies consistently show that drivers and passengers are much more likely to survive a motor vehicle crash if they are wearing a seat belt. Louisiana’s seat belt usage rate is 87.5 percent, and although it has risen in recent years, it still trails the national average of 90.3 percent.

The second resolution drivers should make is to focus solely on their driving. An LHSC report on distracted driving shows that nearly one-third of all Louisiana drivers “engage in some sort of secondary task while driving,” such as talking, texting, reading, or eating.

“To be a safe driver, you have to be present and focused on operating the vehicle,” Freeman said. “It’s easy to get distracted by conversations, navigation systems, the radio, and even our own thoughts.”

Since driving is a high concentration activity, it requires a driver’s full attention to that task. Putting down the phone is one of the best ways to stay focused on driving.

Freeman noted there are other driver behavior problems in the state, such as impaired driving, speeding, and reckless driving. “We will continue to work hard in 2022 to influence drivers’ behaviors to make the roads safer,” she said. “If we can start with these two simple resolutions, that will go a long way to making Louisiana a better — and safer — place to live.”

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