



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
MS AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY  
EXPERIMENT STATION

# MAFES DAWG TRACKS

April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month. Starkville police have stated that over 90% of the accidents they respond to are a result of distracted drivers; this is most likely true for other towns too. Each day in the USA, nine people are killed and over 1,000 injured in crashes reported to have a distracted driver.

Texting and driving increases your chances of a crash by 23 times.

Looking at your phone for 5 seconds, if driving 55 mph, means you have traveled the length of a football field blindly.

A moment of distraction is all it takes to change a life forever. According to the National Safety Council, “Handheld and hands-free phone calls and texts, emails, social media, passengers, snacks and even built-in vehicle touchscreens are just some of the distractions fighting for your attention on the road.”

## Cell phones are not the only problem!

**BIGGEST MYTH:** Drivers can multitask.

**BIGGEST REALITY:** The human brain CANNOT do two things at the same time – driving and any other task. Both take concentration, so the brain switches between the two tasks slowing reaction time.

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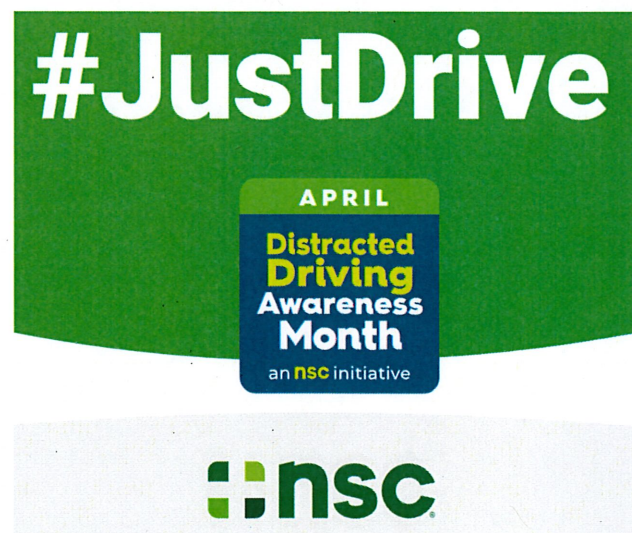
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The harsh reality is the number of distracted driving accidents has not decreased in the last several years but increased. This is in spite of many vehicle manufacturers efforts to integrate the phone functions and more into dashboard interfaces and voice-recognition systems. They all claim in their marketing that these extra features make for safer driving, but when asked “How?”, none would give an answer or even declined the interview, according to a LA Times article.

This seems to be evidence that the problem is not the physical object of a phone or controls position, or even the voice-command and Bluetooth abilities. The loss of focus on the task of driving responsibly is the root cause of distracted driving accidents.



## Sources:

<https://nationaltoday.com/distracted-driving-awareness-month/>

<https://www.nsc.org/road/distracted-driving-awareness-month>

<https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2022-07-06/we-are-killing-people-how-technology-has-made-your-car-a-candy-store-of-distraction>

