



For Immediate Release

For more information, please contact:

Jana Davidson
Progressive Agriculture Foundation
888-257-3529 Ext. 703
jdavidson@progressiveaq.org

Just Drive! Stay Focused and Avoid Distractions behind the Wheel

By: Jana L. Davidson, Education Content Specialist for the Progressive Agriculture Foundation

Sadly, thousands die every year due to distracted driving. As technology advances, the ability to send a text or email, make a phone call or update social media are all common distractions that increase the risk of a crash. Earlier this spring, the month of April was designated as Distracted Driving Awareness Month by the National Safety Council in an effort to draw attention to this epidemic. When you get behind the wheel, avoid distractions and “Just Drive!”

Every eight seconds, someone is hurt in a car crash. In 2016, an estimated 40,000 people died in motor vehicle crashes, which is the highest in nine years. Additionally, 4.6 million roadway users were injured seriously enough to require medical attention last year. On the farm, new technologies in agriculture have helped make farmers more efficient, but can also cause distractions leading to injury or death.



In the hustle and bustle of daily life and the struggle to balance work, family and other responsibilities, many try to multitask whether on a short trip to town or long commute to the office. Unfortunately, both driving and cell phone use requires a great deal of thought. Other distracted drivers on the road, wildlife, pedestrians and severe weather conditions are already present and can provide a greater risk when getting behind the wheel. Here are a few ways you can stay safe and keep distractions at bay:

1. **Make a pledge** – Encourage your family to make a pledge to refrain from the use of cell phones when behind the wheel. Have younger children hold you accountable for this pledge. This can mean the difference between life and death.

2. **Your food can wait** - Eating and drinking while driving can also cause distractions. Spilling a hot coffee or reaching for lost French Fries can easily cause your eyes and focus to leave the roadway. Also, be cognizant of your alcohol consumption. Never drive impaired and know the legal alcohol limit for your state. If on medications, identify any side effects that may present a distraction when driving.
3. **Plan ahead** – Before you venture on the road, make adjustments to seats, headrests, mirrors and vehicle controls. If using GPS or navigation systems, enter the address ahead of time or pull over to a safe area to set.
4. **Keep it in park** - Keep accessories you may need when driving, such as sunglasses and blue tooth ear pieces, close by. Place distractions out of reach. Avoid applying make-up, painting your nails, combing your hair, changing your clothes and other grooming practices while driving.
5. **Safety first and always** - Fasten your seatbelt and assure passengers do the same before putting your car in drive.

These safety tips were brought to you by the Progressive Agriculture Safety Day® program. For more information on safety or for details about hosting, donating, volunteering or attending at a Progressive Agriculture Safety Day®, visit www.progressiveag.org or call us toll-free at 888-257-3529.

Photo: At a Progressive Agriculture Safety Day® held in Minnesota, participants learn some common distractions that can arise when driving through the use of a simulated game.

ABOUT PROGRESSIVE AGRICULTURE FOUNDATION

The Progressive Agriculture Safety Day program, the largest rural safety and health education program for children in North America, is a program of the Progressive Agriculture Foundation (PAF), a 501(c)(3) charitable foundation. The foundation's mission is to provide education, training and resources to make farm, ranch and rural life safer and healthier for children and their communities. In 2008, PAF was awarded the Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance National Charity Seal, demonstrating its commitment to accountability and ethical practices. Safety Day applications are due each July 15 for Safety Days that will be conducted the following calendar year. For more information, please visit progressiveag.org.

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Editorial Note: The Progressive Agriculture Safety Day® logo and Safety Day photos are available upon request by calling (888) 257-3529.

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