

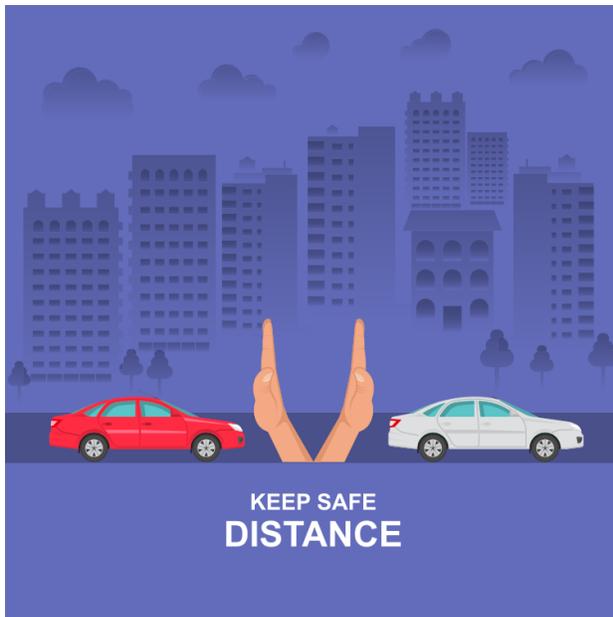
SafeDriver Monthly Newsletter

November 2021



What's a Couple of Seconds?

Distracted driving has become an epidemic problem on America's roads causing at least 3,142 deaths in 2019 (the latest year for which figures have been compiled). The problem is that the modern driving environment presents so many new types of distractions and not enough people realize just how dangerous those distractions can be.



Modern distractions include onboard, Wi-Fi connected visual displays along with GPS and radios. Obviously, the greatest distraction facing drivers today is the use of cell phones both for voice and texting. Even drivers who consider themselves to be safe drivers don't see the harm in glancing away from the road for just a couple of seconds to check a text or dial a number but those couple of seconds can have a huge impact.

The problem comes from the distance traveled in those two seconds. Let's do the math. A vehicle traveling at 40 mph is covering almost 60 feet per second. In two seconds, that adds up to 120 feet or half a city block. So much can happen over that distance and in that short amount of time. A pedestrian could step out into the street or the car ahead may stop and you're traveling 60 feet for every second your eyes are off the road. When you finally look up and realize that there's a problem, you'll eat up more time and space deciding how to handle the emergency by either swerving or slamming on the brakes. Even after you've hit the brakes, it's still going to take time to bring your vehicle to a

stop. At expressway speeds, it can take more than 300 feet (the length of a football field) to bring your vehicle to a complete stop.

You'll wish you had those precious two seconds back to avoid the impending crash. Two seconds can add up to a lifetime. As parents teaching a teen to drive, you'll need to set the example of not allowing distractions to enter into the driving environment.



Winter Driving

Mid-October saw the first snowfalls in the US in the mountainous areas of the western states. That means that winter weather covering much wider areas isn't far behind. It's time to shake off our summer driving habits and start preparing both our vehicles and our minds for winter driving.

Drivers in the north where snow is common need to break out their snow tires before the first storm hits. In certain states, tires with metal studs can only be used from mid-October through the month of April.



Drivers in states like Georgia and the Carolinas where snow is rare but still a distinct possibility may want to keep a set of tire chains in the trunk and learn how to install them before the first storm hits. Trying to figure out how to install them in a blizzard won't be fun. In some states such as California, chains are required for vehicles traveling over certain

mountain passes and there are turnouts available for drivers to install their chains before proceeding. Another good thing to keep in your trunk is a snow shovel.

It's also a good idea to keep blankets in the car just in case. In 2014, in metro Atlanta, drivers were unprepared for a rapidly developing storm that had snow over a layer of ice making Atlanta's hilly roadways impassable. Even in sight of downtown Atlanta, hundreds of thousands of drivers found themselves stranded in their vehicles overnight.

If you find yourself in a similar position, remember, if you keep your engine running to keep warm, make sure that your tailpipe isn't blocked by snow and crack open a window to prevent the buildup of poisonous carbon monoxide gas.

Remember to slow down when driving in snow. Even if your vehicle has good traction, other drivers will be driving cautiously. Don't break the flow of traffic by driving faster than everyone else.

If ice is covering the road, slow down to a crawl. Leave plenty of room between you and other vehicles. Anticipate when you may need to slow down and slow down gently to avoid skidding.

Before driving in snow or ice, make sure that all the ice and snow are cleared from your vehicle. That includes headlights and taillights.

If possible, when winter storms are approaching, avoid driving at all.



Holiday Driving



November is the start of the holiday driving season with Thanksgiving weekend, the most heavily traveled holiday of the year. Thanksgiving will be followed by the month-long Christmas shopping period with its own set of driving challenges.

If you're one of the millions of drivers who plan to hit the road this Thanksgiving, you'll need to keep a few things in mind. Along with being the heaviest traveled holiday period of the year, it's also one of the deadliest holiday periods of the year. On average, approximately 500 people will lose their life in traffic crashes during the Thanksgiving holiday weekend.

The heaviest periods for Thanksgiving traffic will run from 5:00 pm on Wednesday evening through late Sunday evening. On Wednesday and Sunday especially, major highways leading out of major cities can slow to a crawl, so, when planning for your trip, give yourself a couple of extra hours to get to your destination.

You'll need a lot of patience to deal with the traffic, especially since other drivers won't be so patient and will be making dangerous choices such as speeding, driving aggressively and driving under the influence.

Police and highway patrols will be out in force and they'll be vigorously enforcing the traffic laws, especially the seat belt and DUI laws.

If you're able, the best time to travel over the Thanksgiving holiday will be to leave on Tuesday and return on Saturday when traffic will be lighter.

Once the Christmas shopping period starts, you'll need to exercise a lot of patience and set the example for your teen driver. During this period of peace and goodwill, drivers can be ruthless when it comes to blocking intersections and fighting over parking spots. Hopefully, the trend toward online shopping will cut down on some of the traffic but be prepared, don't allow yourself to be distracted, and pay attention to the road. Remember, when it comes to right-of-way, you can't take the right-of-way, you can only give it up to someone else.

Above all, throughout the holiday period, remember that buzzed driving is impaired driving. Alcohol, drugs, and driving don't mix.

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