

Making the Best 4-H Club Better

Intended Audience

- 4-H club members, parents, school groups (age 12 and up)

Lesson Objectives

Participants will:

- Understand the dangers of distracted driving
- Understand the effect of taking one's eyes off the road for even a second
- Make informed decisions about their driving habits

Time: 20 minutes

Equipment and supplies

- Handouts:
 - Distracted Driving Kills
 - Distracted Driving Pledge
- Resource:
 - Suggested Pictures for Distractions Board
- 100 ft. measuring tape or rope at least 100 ft. long
- Stopwatch or cellphone with stopwatch feature.
- Cellphones for each participant
- Distractions Board: A poster with pictures of possible distractions and road hazards

Do ahead

- Review lesson.
- Gather equipment and supplies.
- Create Distractions Board
- Mark 12" sections on rope.
- Locate large outdoor area.

Distracted Driving Kills

BACKGROUND

Americans today have an unhealthy obsession with their cell phones. A survey conducted by the AAA Foundation in 2012 found that two out of three drivers report talking on their cell phones while driving, and one in three reports doing so "regularly." According to the Ohio Highway Patrol, distracted driving accounted for a total of 31,231 crashes on Ohio's roadways from 2009-2011. Seventy-four of these were fatal crashes, and 7,825 resulted in injuries. This number is estimated to be much higher for the period 2012-2014.

Distracted driving is defined as any non-driving activity a person engages in that has the potential to distract him or her from the primary task of driving and increases the risk of crashing. (Source: www.distraction.gov). Distractions can be visual (taking your eyes off the road), manual (taking your hands off the wheel), or cognitive (taking your mind off your driving). Texting involves all three distractions at once. (Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.)

WHAT TO DO

Activity: In this activity participants will see exactly how far their car will travel during the time it takes them to send a short text message. Using the calculations below and the Texting Chart included with this lesson, participations will be able to measure the exact distance traveled. (55 miles per hour x 5,280 feet per mile, which converts to 80 2/3 feet per second, rounded to 81 feet per second.)

Seat participants in chairs and have them take out their cell phones. Tell them that when directed, you will give them a short sentence to text and that from their phone's home screen they will need to open their text and type in the sentence to the point of being able to send it to someone. (Note: They do *not* have to really send it). Once they type the message to the point of sending, they should stand up. Have a volunteer with a stopwatch time the process. Have the volunteer record the time of the first and last person to stand. When the timer is ready ask the participants to text, "I will be there in a few minutes."



Sources:

- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
- The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety
- The Ohio Highway Patrol Trooper Shield

ADDITIONAL LINKS

- www.textinganddrivingsafely.com
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZVc9XSH7pA>
- www.statepatrol.ohio.gov
- www.aaafoundation.org

Once all the participants are standing, explain that traveling at 55 miles per hour, their vehicle has travelled the distance of 81 feet per second while they were texting. Show them the recorded texted times. Normally the fastest will be between 3-4 seconds and the slowest around 12-15 seconds. Move to a large area with your measuring tape or marked rope and have them measure out the distance of the shortest text time. If the text took 4 seconds, the vehicle travelled $4 \times 81 = 323$ feet. Use the full length of the 100-foot rope 3 times plus an additional 23 feet. *For fun, if you have space and time, you can have them measure the longest text time or take the average of the group and measure it.*

Distribute and discuss the *Distracted Driving Pledge*.

Additional Activities: Show participant the Distractions Board you have made with pictures of possible distractions and road hazards. Discuss what could happen in the distance traveled: a child could run out into the road, the car in front of you could stop suddenly, you could hit a pothole in the road, you could come up on a slow moving vehicle such as an Amish buggy, and so on.

Show and discuss the YouTube video "The Last Text" or read a personal account story of someone who has lost a loved one in a crash due to distracted driving. Personal testimonies from guest speakers are also an option.

TALK IT OVER

Reflect:

- Is texting and driving ever the right thing to do?
- Have you been in a car with someone who was texting and driving? How did that make you feel?

Apply:

- Will you ever text while driving?
- If you're a passenger in a car with someone who is texting while driving, what, if any, action will you take?

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March 2014