



# Drive Safely

## CHALLENGE

Be safe behind the wheel

### Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read “Drive Safely.”
2. Create a plan to practice safe driving every time you get behind the wheel.
3. Keep a record of your completed challenge in case your organization requires documentation.



How’s your driving? The next time you get behind the wheel, think about this...

When New Jersey resident Alexandra Mansonet left home in a black Mercedes-Benz just after 8 a.m. one morning, she was thinking about work and dinner plans later that night.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, Dr. Yuwen Wang was out for a walk on a work break to get some fresh air. She had just celebrated a six-year anniversary with her husband the night before, and the couple was trying to get pregnant.

Mansonet’s cell phone buzzed. “Cuban, American or Mexican for dinner. Pick one.” She read the message, and started typing a response. But cell phone records show all she typed was, “me...”

A split second later, Mansonet’s car hit the back of a Toyota Corolla. The impact forced the Corolla off the road and out of control. It hit Wang out for a walk and sent her flying. She died a few days later from her injuries.

Mansonet was later convicted of second-degree vehicular homicide and sentenced to five years in prison for the crash that killed Wang.

Do you ever drive distracted, speed, or break other traffic laws? Texting while driving is against the law in most states. But many other distractions or poor choices while driving can be just as dangerous. Want to be a better driver? Take the month-long health challenge to Drive Safely.

### The Driver’s Seat Quiz

Are you a safe driver?<sup>2</sup>  
Take the quiz to find out.



- | T                           | F                        |  |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 1. <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Texting while driving raises your crash risk by three times compared to drunk driving.                         |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Driving while tired interferes with reflexes, judgment, and the ability to pay attention.                      |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | If you have a lot of driving experience, it’s OK to drive faster than the speed limit.                         |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | When you’re behind the wheel, any activity that takes your attention away from the road is distracted driving. |
| 5. <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | More than half of all people killed or hurt in car accidents aren’t wearing seat belts.                        |

How did you do? Distracted driving of any kind can put you and others at risk. Texting while driving is six times more dangerous than drunk driving. If you’re tired, don’t get behind the wheel. Always follow the speed limit and other traffic laws. And don’t forget to buckle up.

*Answers: 1. False, 2. True, 3. False, 4. True, 5. True*

### Distracted Driving: A Front-Seat View

Not every traffic accident can be prevented. With an estimated 284 million cars on the road in the U.S., there’s bound to be some fender-benders, accidents, and fatalities from time to time.



But distracted driving crashes and fatalities are largely preventable. Here’s an annual front-seat view of the dangers of distracted driving:<sup>2,3</sup>

- **400,000** people are injured in car accidents caused by distracted driving
- **33,000** car-accident injuries are caused by a driver using a cell phone
- **3,142** people are killed in car accidents caused by distracted driving
- **6.7 million** car accidents are caused by distracted driving resulting in fatalities, injuries and property damage

Video: Hazards of distracted driving  
<https://tinyurl.com/4r3v5d6z>

Safe driving habits could prevent most of these car accidents from happening. Here’s another way to think about this: If Mansonet left her phone alone that morning, Wang might still be alive.



# 6 Ways to Be Safe Behind the Wheel

At any given moment during daylight hours, more than 800,000 vehicles are being driven by someone using a hand-held cell phone.<sup>4</sup>

But it's not the only form of distracted driving. Distractions include:<sup>5</sup>

- **Visual:** Taking your eyes off the road
- **Manual:** Taking your hands off the wheel
- **Cognitive:** Taking your mind off driving

And it doesn't have to be this way. Just a few simple choices and habits can keep you and others safe when you're behind the wheel. Here are some things you can do:

## 1. Buckle up

Make it the first thing you do when you get in the car. And make sure everyone else is buckled, too. Seat belts save lives.

## 2. Turn off your phone

No texting or talking on a phone while driving.



- It's against the law in most states.
- Even hands-free devices while driving can be a distraction.

## 3. Never drive impaired

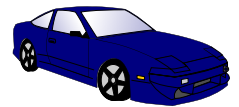
If you've been drinking or using drugs, don't get behind the wheel. Some medicines can impair your judgment, too (read the label or ask your doctor). If you are impaired:

- Ask a friend for a ride.
- Call a taxi, Uber or Lyft.
- Take the bus.
- If you're tired, don't drive. Or pull over and take a nap.



## 4. Inspect your car

Before you drive, walk around your car to make sure nothing is in the way.



- Make sure your tires are in good condition.
- Check brakes, windshield wipers, headlights, and turn signals
- Make any necessary repairs before driving.

## 5. Follow the speed limit & obey traffic laws

If you're late for work, school, or an important meeting, you might think speeding or making an illegal U-turn might help you get there on time. But it's not worth the risk of causing an accident.

- Plan ahead to give yourself plenty of time.
- If driving conditions are poor (wind, snow, ice, rain), slow down or stay home.

## 6. Minimize distractions

Texting while driving or using a cell phone isn't the only distraction to avoid while driving. Other distractions include:

- Eating
- Grooming
- Reading
- Childcare
- Talking
- Even behind-the-wheel karaoke can distract you from driving

Avoid any activity that will distract you from driving.

### Want to live longer and avoid causing a car accident?

Turn off your cell phone. Practice safe driving habits. And pay attention to other drivers on the road.



## References

1. Schweber, N., et al. (2019). She texted about dinner while driving. Then a pedestrian was dead. *New York Times*. From: <https://tinyurl.com/3kdea2j8>
2. U.S. Department of Transportation. (2020). Distracted Driving. National Highway Transportation Safety Administration. From: <https://tinyurl.com/2szuyt4x>
3. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (2020). Traffic Safety Facts: Distracted Driving. From: <https://tinyurl.com/4f8zk7tf>
4. National Conference of State Legislatures. (2021). Distracted Driving: Cell Phone use. From: <https://tinyurl.com/2s3ncmvb>
5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). Distracted driving. From: <https://tinyurl.com/4c43pssc>



# Drive Safely

## CHALLENGE

Be safe  
behind the  
wheel

### Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, or add to your digital calendar).
2. Avoid distractions and follow traffic laws to be safe behind the wheel.
3. Use the calendar to record your actions to drive safely.
4. Review your driving habits at the end of each day. Then keep up the practice for a lifetime of best health.

MONTH: _____							HC = Health Challenge™	ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary	
HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____		
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\_\_\_\_\_ Number of days this month I practiced safe driving habits  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Number of days this month I exercised at least 30 minutes

### Other wellness projects completed this month:

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_