Distracted Driving—It’s Not Worth It

A 2009 Virginia Tech Transportation Institute study found actively texting drivers take their eyes off the road for an average of 4.6 seconds out of every 6 seconds. At 55 mph, drivers can travel the length of a football field without looking at the road. Texting can make a car crash 23 times more likely for truck drivers and six times more likely for most motorists. This is just one example of distracted driving. Read on for 10 tips from GHSA for managing some of the most common distractions.

1. **Turn it off.** Turn your phone off or switch to silent mode before you get in the car.
2. **Spread the word.** Set up a special message to tell callers that you are driving and you’ll get back to them as soon as possible, or sign up for a service that offers this.
3. **Pull over.** If you need to make a call, pull over to a safe area first.
4. **Use your passengers.** Ask a passenger to make the call for you.
5. **X the Text.** Don’t ever text and drive, surf the web or read your email while driving. It is dangerous and against the law in most states.
6. **Know the law.** Familiarize yourself with state and local laws before you get in the car. Some states and localities prohibit the use of hand held cell phones. GHSA offers a handy chart of state laws on its website: www.ghsa.org/html/stateinfo/laws/cellphone_laws.html.
7. **Prepare.** Review maps and directions before you start to drive. If you need help when you are on the road, ask a passenger to help or pull over to a safe location to review the map/directions again.
8. **Secure your pets.** Pets can be a big distraction in the car. Always secure your pets properly before you start to drive.
9. **Keep the kids safe.** Pull over to a safe location to address situations with your children in the car.
10. **Focus on the task at hand.** Refrain from smoking, eating, drinking, reading and any other activity that takes your mind and eyes off the road.

From: Governor’s Highway Safety Association
### Spring Break Training for All!
Join the Workplace Safety Committee on Tuesday, March 13th at 10:00 or 1:30 for tips on:

- **Ergonomics**
- **Repetitive Motion**
- **Office Safety**

There will be two sessions offered so choose the one that best fits your schedule.

(Refreshments included)

Look for additional information in the Message Center in February!

Be heart healthy and back friendly while shoveling this winter with these tips:

- If you are inactive and have a history of heart trouble, talk to your doctor before you take on the task of shoveling snow.
- Avoid caffeine or nicotine before beginning. These are stimulants, which may increase your heart rate and cause your blood vessels to constrict. This places extra stress on the heart.
- Drink plenty of water. Dehydration is just as big an issue in cold winter months as it is in the summer.
- Dress in several layers so you can remove a layer as needed. Synthetic fibers help wick away perspiration better than natural fibers.
- Warm your muscles before shoveling by walking for a few minutes or marching in place. Stretch the muscles in your arms and legs because warm muscles will work more efficiently and be less likely to be injured.
- Pick the right shovel for you. A smaller blade will require you to lift less snow, putting less strain on your body.
- Begin shoveling slowly to avoid placing a sudden demand on your heart. Pace yourself and take breaks as needed.
- Protect your back from injury by lifting correctly. Stand with your feet about hip width for balance and keep the shovel close to your body. Bend from the knees (not the back) and tighten your stomach muscles as you lift the snow. Avoid twisting movements. If you need to move the snow to one side, reposition your feet to face the direction the snow will be going.
- Most importantly, listen to your body. Stop if you feel pain.

NDSU Extension Service website: www.ag.ndsu.edu/extension

Ladder Hazards During Outside Clean-up

Cleaning gutters, checking the condition of the roof and washing windows are common outside chores that require the use of a ladder. Last year in the US, more than 532,000 people were injured in falls from ladders, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Follow these ladder safety tips for a safe climb up the ladder:

- Inspect the ladder for loose screws, hinges or rungs. Clean off accumulated mud, dirt or liquids.
- Make sure all ladder legs are on a firm, level surface. Don’t place a ladder on uneven, soft or muddy ground.
- Before you climb a ladder, make sure all ladder locks and safety braces are engaged.
- Never sit or stand on the top of a step ladder or pail shelf. These areas weren’t designed to hold heavy weights.
- Select the proper ladder for the job. A step ladder is good for washing windows and other jobs at low or medium heights. Use an extension ladder for high places, such as cleaning the gutters.
- Don’t stretch or lean from your ladder to reach a work area. Climb down the ladder and reposition it closer to your work area.

From: www.prohealthcare.org