

# THE SLG ADVISOR

APR  
2023



## DISTRACTED DRIVING : IT'S NOT JUST A YOUNG PEOPLE PROBLEM

*Nearly Everyone Struggles With It*

If you've looked through the headlines within this newsletter, you've probably noticed a common thread. They're all about preventing distracted driving. That's because April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month. This issue is near and dear to my heart. It's not just teenagers who fall into the trap of distracted driving; we're all guilty of it from time to time. Even I struggle with it on a regular basis.

Over the past few years, I've fallen into the bad habit of checking my text messages while driving. Hearing that buzz gives me an extra boost of dopamine I guess, and I can't stop myself from checking my phone. I even tried switching to an Apple Watch but found that I was getting just as distracted checking my watch as I was looking at my phone.

This behavior started to worry me a few months back when I really began to think about it. Working as a car accident lawyer, I've seen it all. Extreme carnage and bad situations arise when people drive distracted. You'd think knowing this would cause me to modify my behavior, but it hasn't. I'm still guilty of it, but I'm trying very hard to break myself of the habit.

One thing that's helped deter me a bit from driving distracted is putting a photo of my son and daughter on my visor. I look

at that when I drive, and it serves as a reminder to stay as safe as possible on the road. How upset or mad would they be if something happened to me because I was texting and driving? How upset would I be with myself if I injured someone else through my actions? Looking at the photo of my children and asking myself these questions allows me to push distractions aside and focus on driving.

I also read James Clear's book, "Atomic Habits." It's helped me put steps and processes in place to break my bad habits and start good ones in their place. The methods in this book have certainly helped me, and I encourage anyone who has not read it to pick it up and give it a try.

Despite all my efforts, I'm still a work in progress. I'll be driving with my wife to New Hampshire, and she'll literally yell at me for looking at my phone. I don't even realize I'm doing it half the time. I'm a victim of my own bad habits. I'm writing this article in February, and I hope by the time you're reading this in April, I'll have kicked the habit. If you have any advice for me or strategies that helped you avoid the temptation of using your phone in the car, I'd love to hear from you.

Our phones don't just distract us while driving; they're a constant source of distraction. A national lawyer group

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# Checking That Text Isn't Worth It

## The Dangers of Distracted Driving

There's no doubt about it; distracted driving is a serious problem, threatening everyone on the road. In America, nine people are killed every day in crashes involving a distracted driver according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Thousands of car accidents occur every day due to distracted driving. Yet, many of us continue to engage in distracted behaviors behind the wheel, such as texting, talking on the phone, or eating.

You might think that taking your eyes off the road to check your phone isn't too big of a deal, but we often don't realize how fast we're traveling when we do it. Checking your phone for five seconds while driving 55 mph is like driving the length of a football field blindfolded. Read that again!

There are three types of distracted driving: visual, manual, and cognitive. Visual driving distractions cause you to take your eyes off the road. Manual distractions force you to remove your hands from the wheel. And cognitive distractions occur when you take your mind off the road. Each of these behaviors is dangerous, but when we combine them, the risk of an accident escalates.

Texting while driving is one of the most dangerous forms of distracted driving as it involves manual, visual, and cognitive distractions. Information from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) tells us that texting while driving increases the risk of an accident by 23%. When a driver takes their eyes off the road to read or respond to a text, they take all their attention away from the task at hand.

According to AT&T's It Can Wait campaign, 95% of Americans view distracted driving as a problem, yet nearly 80% openly admit to driving while distracted. Putting an end to distracted driving starts with each of us. Put your phone on silent and out of reach while driving, and avoid eating or drinking. Doing so will help make the roads safer for all who use them.



# These Apps Can

## CAN YOUR PHONE PREVENT DISTRACTED DRIVING?

While it may sound preposterous, there are ways your phone can help you stay focused on the road. New apps can now help you concentrate by keeping you off your phone. While distracted driving can be caused by anything pulling your attention away, smartphones are the most common culprit. Checking your phone for texts, calls, or social media updates while driving has become a dangerous habit for many. That's why developers created distracted driving apps that can keep you accountable and safe.

Whether it's silencing notifications or tracking your phone use, these apps can help keep your phone out of your hands when behind the wheel. This Distracted Driving Awareness Month, download these apps to kick your dangerous phone habits to the curb and remain safe while driving.

### I'm Driving

Want everyone to know you're driving before they can text or call you? I'm Driving lets you notify your contacts that you are

## Review of the Month



*"Spada Law is by far the best in the industry. By showing our family the caring and patience, to take the time needed, we were able to have amazing results. We were treated like family. Thank you! A truly great team."*

**- Anthony D.**

# n Save Your Life

## DISTRACTED DRIVING?

operating a vehicle and unable to reach your phone. Alerts advise others that you are behind the wheel and your full attention is needed to prevent an accident. The app also shares who in your contact list is driving so you can refrain from calling or texting them.

### Drivemode Dash

Once your driving speed hits 15 mph, Drivemode Dash will silence texts, calls, and other phone notifications. By silencing your phone, you can avoid distracting ringtones and alarms. Additionally, the app can send automated replies to people trying to contact you and let them know you are behind the wheel. Drivemode Dash is a foolproof way to keep your eyes on the road.

### SAFE 2 SAVE

Utilizing an incentive program, SAFE 2 SAVE will keep any driver off their phone. This app gives users 2 points for every minute they drive over 10 mph without distractions. Then, users can redeem their points at different businesses. SAFE 2 SAVE is also a perfect choice for those wanting to get competitive. With the app's games, you and your friends can discover who's the safest driver.

All three apps are available for free on Androids and iPhones. Driver-friendly apps like these can help you observe Distracted Driving Awareness Month and stay focused year-round.



*... continued from Cover*

I belong to asked its members to develop a challenging goal we wanted to accomplish. We have to check in, and they hold us accountable. Instead of picking texting and driving, my challenge was to improve my sleep habits. Scrolling through social media and looking at other mindless media before bed disrupted my sleep. I started putting my phone on its charging dock at 7 p.m. and wouldn't look at it again until I woke up early in the morning. I began to notice improvements within the first week. Hopefully, I can continue this behavior once the challenge has ended.

There's no need for any of us to drive distracted, but we need to take steps to break ourselves from the dangerous habit of using our phones while driving. This issue means a lot to me. Make sure to check out the rest of the newsletter if you're trying to break the habit of distracted driving!

*-Len Spada*

## Portobello Mushroom Burger

*I had a portobello mushroom burger the other day that completely blew my mind. It was almost like eating a regular hamburger! I encourage you to try this recipe, but don't bring the burger with you when you drive because it will definitely become a distraction!*

### INGREDIENTS

- 4 portobello mushroom caps
- 1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp minced garlic
- 1 tsp dried basil
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 4 slices Swiss cheese
- 4 buns

### DIRECTIONS

1. In a shallow dish, place mushroom caps smooth side up.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together balsamic vinegar, olive oil, garlic, basil, oregano, and salt and pepper.
3. Pour mixture over mushrooms and let stand for 15 minutes. Turn mushrooms twice while marinating.
4. Preheat grill to medium-high and brush grill grates with oil.
5. Place mushrooms on grill, frequently brush with marinade, and cook for 5-8 minutes.
6. Top burger with Swiss cheese and grill until cheese is melted.
7. Place on buns and add toppings of your choice! Enjoy!

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How to Teach Kids Internet Safety



Scan to follow us on social media!



# *It's Time to Stream!* INTERNET SAFETY 101

Technology surrounds us now more than ever. There are always new apps in the app store, new games, and countless social media posts. Today, we also see children spending more time on the internet. But using these platforms comes with risks and responsibility – is your child ready to navigate them?

## Talk to your child about online dangers.

Before giving your child permission to use the internet or buying them a smartphone, they must understand the different types of online dangers. There are many harmful things on the internet your children do not need to see. Talk to them about phishing, piracy, obscenity, online predators, cyberbullying,



revealing personal information, and how people may not be who they say they are.

## Set standards and boundaries for internet/phone use.

What sites are they allowed to get on? Which social media programs are they allowed to visit? Is there any information you would want them to keep private? How long or often can they be on the internet? Don't wait until something terrible happens to begin implementing online safety rules. Make guidelines proactively for your children to follow so they know what is expected of them.

## Encourage your children to talk to you.

Unfortunately, around 60% of kids claim they hardly talk to their parents

about what they're experiencing online. Therefore, your children must know they can come to you instead of hiding their concerns. Remember that your child may fear you'll be angry with them if something questionable happens, so keep an open mind and understand your child's situation. This will encourage them to come to you more often if a problem occurs.

By implementing an open line of communication, informing them about the dangers of the internet, and setting boundaries, your child will have all the tools they need to safely use the internet and social media. Be aware of what they are doing and check their phones periodically. However, if you would like more resources on how to teach your child about internet safety, you can find tons of information online!