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Distractions are everywhere, but giving in to distractions while driving, for even mere seconds, can be fatal. April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month, and ForCarDrivers.com and the Motorcycle Safety Foundation are committed to helping drivers drive distraction free.

MSF would like to remind all drivers that motorcycles *are out there*. Many drivers don't expect to see motorcycles and therefore don't see them until it's too late.

The MSF has created a collection of insightful tips for car and truck drivers. In this [publication](#) (*Quick Tips: Ten Things All Car & Truck Drivers Should Know About Motorcycles*), the first tip has to do with drivers actually seeing motorcycles:

Over half of all fatal motorcycle crashes involve another vehicle. Most of the time, the car or truck driver, not the motorcyclist, is at fault. There are a lot more cars and trucks than motorcycles on the road, and some drivers don't "recognize" a motorcycle – they ignore it (usually unintentionally).

Driving Cell Free

According to the National Safety Council, "Hands-free is not risk-free." A full 80 percent of American drivers believe that hands-free devices are safer to use than their hand-held counterparts. However, distraction happens in the mind, and the mind can become distracted by the conversation itself, whether that conversation is hands-free or holding a phone. The goal should be to completely free up the mind to focus on the task at hand – driving, and doing so safely. To do just that, the NSC recommends driving "cell free."

The NSC has created a list of strategies to avoid cell phone distractions while driving. They include:

- Turn off your cell phone, or put it on silent, before driving.
- Toss your cell phone in the trunk or glove box to avoid temptation.
- Pre-set your navigation system and music playlists before driving.
- Schedule stops to check voicemails, emails and texts.
- Tell coworkers, family and friends not to call or text you when they know you are driving.

The Mind's Eye

In the book *Traffic: Why We Drive the Way We Do (and What It Says About Us)*, author Tom Vanderbilt says, "Keeping one's eyes on the road is not necessarily the same thing as keeping one's mind on the road."

Unfortunately, drivers don't have to be distracted very long to get into trouble. According to Vanderbilt, one study found that almost 80 percent of crashes and 65 percent of near-crashes involved drivers who were not paying attention to traffic for three seconds or less before the event. Distractions while driving can take many forms, such as eating, personal grooming, or even just mentally reliving a recent unpleasant conversation or event. "Beyond a certain threshold, the more that is asked of [human attention], the less well it performs," says Vanderbilt.

One group of drivers – teens – is especially at risk. Teen drivers are more distracted than previously thought, according to a new study by the AAA Foundation of Traffic Safety. After analyzing approximately 1,700 samples of in-car video footage, researchers found that 58 percent of crashes among teen drivers were due to distracted driving. The study found that the main causes of distraction among teen drivers were interacting with other passengers, cellphone use, looking at something inside the car, singing or moving to music, grooming and reaching for objects.

"Improvement in any skill requires a constant intent to improve," said MSF President Tim Buche. "A great time to become intentionally focused on driving undistracted is while putting on the seatbelt. This is a safety-related action that we can all use as a trigger to make a focused, intentional commitment to driving undistracted."

The MSF has published several safety booklets, quick tips, videos and other downloadable materials for motorcyclists and car & truck drivers. Please visit msf-usa.org and click [Library](#).

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