



The Licking County Safe Communities Coalition Quarterly Newsletter

JANUARY VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1

Our Mission

“To decrease the number of fatal or serious injury motor vehicle crashes by promoting safe driving behaviors through a community-wide effort of planning, education, and enforcement.”

Our Goal

“To reduce traffic-related injuries and fatalities through education on proper seatbelt use, motorcycle safety, eliminating impaired driving, and distracted driving.”

The Licking County Safe Communities Coalition is coordinated by the Licking County Health Department through a grant from the Ohio Department of Public Safety.

Hello!

I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season and are well on your way to a safe and healthy 2016! Unfortunately, 2015 ended with several crash fatalities in Licking County. The coalition is working closely with law enforcement to determine any trends and/or countermeasures related to these crashes in order to keep people safer on the roads. If you haven't made a New Year's Resolution yet, make one about committing to be focused on driving this year. Put away all types of distractions and focus on the single task of driving. This not only keeps you and others safe on the roads, but sets an example for any passengers in your vehicle. And of course, don't forget to buckle up!

I hope you find this issue informative and useful.

Be well & be safe,
Carrie Minor, Safe Communities Coordinator

Crash Fatality Difference

YTD 2015 vs. YTD 2014

+4

provisional number last
updated 1/3/2016.

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Traffic Safety Updates

In 2015, there were 21 fatal crashes with a total of 23 fatalities in Licking County. Compared to 2014, fatal crashes increased by four. In 2014, there were 17 crashes with 19 fatalities in Licking County. During the last quarter of 2015 there were seven fatal crashes. Of the seven crashes, two involved alcohol and/or drugs, one involved a pedestrian, one involved a bicyclist, and one involved a child. There was one motorcycle crash this past quarter also. During the same time frame in 2014, there were four reported fatal crashes.

The state of Ohio has also experienced an increase in fatal crashes this year. As of Jan. 6, Ohio has confirmed 1,102 fatal crashes in 2015 compared to 1,008 in 2014; an increase of nine percent. It is hard to determine what the exact cause is for the increase in traffic deaths. The overwhelming majority of crashes are due to driver error and therefore, are preventable.

The following are the number of confirmed fatalities for prior years:

- 2013: 990 fatalities in Ohio / 14 fatalities in Licking County.
- 2012: 1,122 fatalities in Ohio / 11 fatalities in Licking County.



Are You Ready for Winter Driving?

The winter weather is here and it's important to make sure you and your vehicle are prepared. If you take some time to plan and review some safe winter travel tips you will have a better chance at preventing major issues from a breakdown or crash during the winter. It will be much easier to deal with these types of consequences if you plan and prepare.

During the winter of 2014-2015, there were 24,747 crashes on snow, ice or slush covered roads in Ohio. This was a decrease of 28 percent over the previous winter. Fatal crashes fell from 35 to 30 over the four-month period from December to March. Crashes on snow, ice or slush covered roads accounted for 31 deaths and 6,676 injuries last winter.

As the cold temperatures begin to set in, get prepared with these tips:

- **Plan before you go** - Visit your mechanic and have your car serviced for routine maintenance.
- **On the road**- Stay alert. Keep your gas tank close to full. If road conditions are hazardous, avoid driving if possible until road and weather conditions improve.
- **Safety First**- Protect yourself and loved ones by making sure everyone in the vehicle is properly buckled up. Keep children safe with properly installed car seats and booster seats.
- **In an Emergency**– Stay with your car and don't overexert yourself. Use bright markings on the outside of the car. Do not run your car for long periods of time to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.

For more on these safety tips visit safercar.gov.

The Danger of Mental Distraction

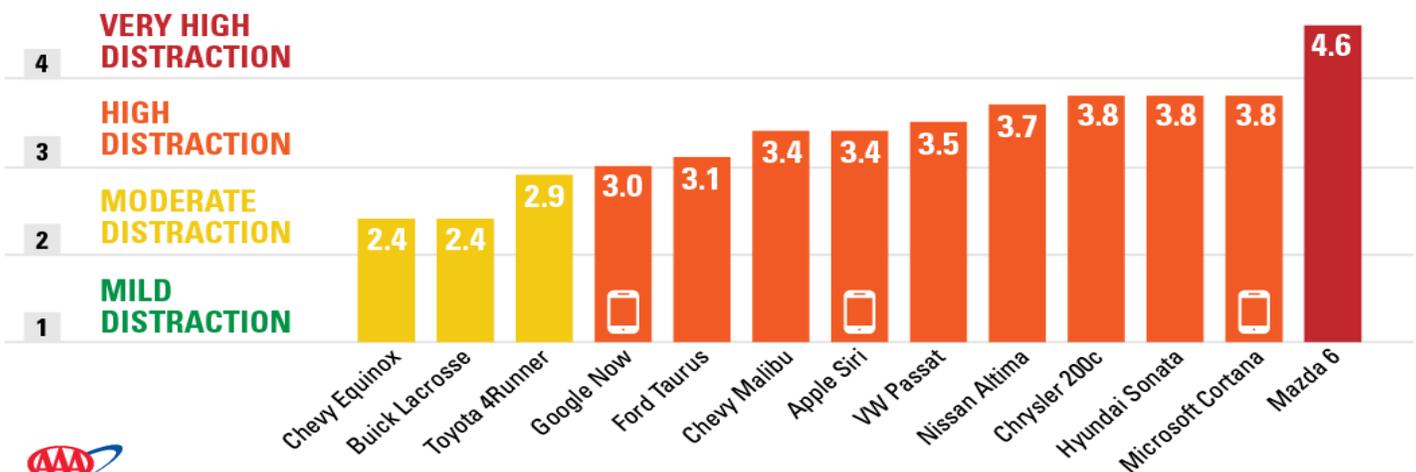
People often think of texting and driving or using a cell phone when they think about distracted driving. The use of a cell phone while driving is not the only source of distracted driving. Distracted driving is *anything* that takes your hands, eyes, and/or mind off of the task of driving. Examples could be reaching for something on the floor, changing the radio station, talking to a passenger, or even just getting lost in thought. These, and many more activities drivers attempt while driving, are distractions and they are dangerous.

According to the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, attention also needs to be given to mental or cognitive distraction. Hands-free technologies in vehicles are meant to increase a driver's safety, but research has found they still cause various levels of distraction. AAA has long warned that hands-free is not risk free. Just because a drivers' eyes are on the road and hands are on the wheel does not mean a motorists is safely focusing on driving. Research by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety confirms mental distraction is real and dangerous. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), one of every ten fatal crashes in the U.S. involves distraction, resulting in more than 3,000 deaths per year.

Many people think hands-free systems in cars are safer than handheld phones, but hands-free does not mean risk free. Many studies have researched hands-free cell phones to determine if there is a significant difference in safety. The research has not shown significant benefits from using hands-free systems because they still cause mental distraction to the driver.

Before you put all your confidence into your car's hands-free or voice activated features, review this graph and remember hands-free is not risk free.

MENTAL DISTRACTION RANKINGS OF VOICE-ACTIVATED SYSTEMS*



Source: AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety

*Mental distraction rankings when using voice-commands to make calls or change music while driving. Includes 2015 model-year vehicles.

AAA gives [ten tips for preventing distracted driving](#). Drivers should always minimize the use of hands-free or voice activated technologies in the car while driving to ensure safety. AAA advises as a general rule, if you cannot devote your full attention to driving because of some other activity, it is a distraction. Take care of it before or after your trip, not while behind the wheel.

Click [here](#) to learn more about the research AAA has conducted on Distracted Driving.

On the Road Ahead: Upcoming Events and Campaigns

- Feb. 7: Super Bowl Sunday - *Fans Don't Let Fans Drive Drunk*
- March 17: St. Patrick's Day - *Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving*
- April: Distracted Driving Awareness Month
- Car seat checks at the Clintonville Fire Station from 10 a.m.—1 p.m. on Jan. 26, Feb. 9, Feb. 25, March 8. Contact Columbus Public Health for more information, (614) 645-7748.
- The Licking County Health Department also provides free car seat inspections for families who would like a certified child passenger safety technician to assist with the installation. The health department provides car seat inspections by appointment only. Please call (740) 349-6535 and request the car seat program to schedule an appointment.

Find campaign materials at trafficsafetymarketing.gov.



STAY ALIVE!
don't TXT & drive



Active Coalition Member Agencies

City of Newark	Newark Fire Dept.
Licking Co. Coroner's Office	Newark Police Dept.
Licking Co. Area Transportation Study	Ohio Dept. of Public Safety
Licking Co. CARTEENS	Ohio Dept. of Transportation
Licking Co. Health Dept.	Ohio State Highway Patrol
Licking Co. Sheriff's Office	Utica Police Dept.
Matesich Distributing	State Farm

Interested in joining Safe Communities?

Join us the third Wednesday of the month. Meetings are held at noon, monthly, at the Licking County Health Department.

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