

# AAAWORLD

## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

### COMBATTING ‘INTEXTICATION’

MARCH/APRIL 2019

April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month and an opportune time for a more public conversation about the pervasive problem of distracted driving.

We know that our members care about this issue, and our AAA club is launching a far-reaching safety campaign to advocate for you as a driver and passenger. Our campaign targets drivers who would never consider getting behind the wheel after drinking a beer or any other alcoholic beverage and, yet, will regularly use mobile devices while driving that dangerously take their eyes and minds off the road.



The campaign “Don’t Drive Intoxicated—Don’t Drive Intexticated” was created with the goal of making distracted driving socially unacceptable—just as socially unacceptable as drinking and driving. And why not? The two are comparably dangerous and deadly. AAA’s sobering “intexticated” message makes clear that the consequences of both alcohol-impaired driving and texting while driving are often the same: deaths and injuries among drivers, passengers and pedestrians.

Every day, distracted driving kills an average of 9 people and injures 1,000, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. It is the third-leading driver-related cause of crash fatalities, only surpassed by speeding and driving under the influence.

Research by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety reveals that even though 97 percent of drivers say texting/emailing while driving is a serious or very serious threat to their safety, 45 percent admit to having read a text or email while driving—and 35 percent admit to having typed one while driving—in the past month.

Decades of public education efforts against alcohol-impaired driving and related efforts have helped reduce by half the number of alcohol-impaired crash fatalities since the 1980s, according to the National Institutes of Health. Similarly, we can make a difference with texting and emailing behind the wheel, too.

In the coming months, you will see and hear AAA in social and traditional media sharing messages and telling stories about the dangers of distracted driving, including texting and emailing while driving. It's critical that we all be responsible drivers and passengers who understand the importance of not driving "intoxicated"—or distracted in any way—so that we can all be safer together on the road.

*Tom Wiedemann*

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