

Negligent Driving Will Cost Lives This Season

(NAPSA)—When checking off your list of what to do this season, don't forget to add "drive responsibly."

Busy schedules, too little sleep and too many gadgets in the car can result in negligent driving—and many people underestimate how much damage negligent driving does. Every 13 minutes, negligent driving costs a life on the nation's highways. Negligent driving falls into four categories:

Speeding

Many—if not most—Americans routinely cruise at 10, 15 or even 20 mph over the posted limit, with little thought to the danger associated with these speeds.

But in 2005 alone, 13,113 people died in speed-related crashes, accounting for 30 percent of all fatalities. That's more than the number of people killed in drunk driving accidents.

Distracted Driving

At any given moment, about 10 percent of drivers are talking on a cell phone. Studies have shown that driving while talking on any cell phone—even a hands-free model—impairs a driver more than driving at the legal drunk driving limit.

Despite this widespread understanding, no state currently bans all cell phone use while driving. A few states have a fine for not using a hands-free model; but compare this to the jail time, fines and criminal record that go with blowing the legal blood alcohol limit.

Drunk Driving

Drunk driving fatalities have plummeted 38 percent since the early 1980s. Progress has stalled in the last decade and coincides with an increased focus on so-called populationwide measures such as sobriety checkpoints, which aim to target the general public, instead of measures to go



Before pulling out, eliminate distractions. Buckle up, check your messages and take care of children's needs.

after drunk drivers and other negligent drivers.

Drowsy Driving

In today's fast-paced world, more and more Americans are skimping on sleep—to the detriment of highway safety. Government research has found that drowsy drivers are more than six times more likely to crash than alert drivers, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that up to 100,000 crashes each year are caused by drowsy drivers. The reason is simple: Drowsy drivers have slower reaction times, difficulty concentrating, and even nod off while driving.

To help drive home the message, the American Beverage Institute is sponsoring a public service campaign this season to make people aware of the dangers associated with negligent driving.

"In order to increase traffic safety, we need to get dangerous drivers—whether speeding, drunk, distracted or drowsy—off the nation's roads," said John Doyle, executive director of the American Beverage Institute. "There is one simple way to do that: put more law enforcement officers on the highways to catch these negligent drivers."

For more information, including statistics and solutions to help make the highways safer, visit www.negligentdriving.com.