



Distracted driving causes senseless injuries and deaths on our roadways. These crashes are preventable and unacceptable. Driving is a serious responsibility and should be treated as such. A driver's full attention should be focused on the road. Even if you have the best of intentions, it is hard to ignore distractions in and around your vehicle.

Follow the tips inside to keep yourself safe, attentive, and protected when driving.

DRIVE SMART VIRGINIA
720 Moorefield Park Dr., Suite 201
Richmond, Virginia 23236

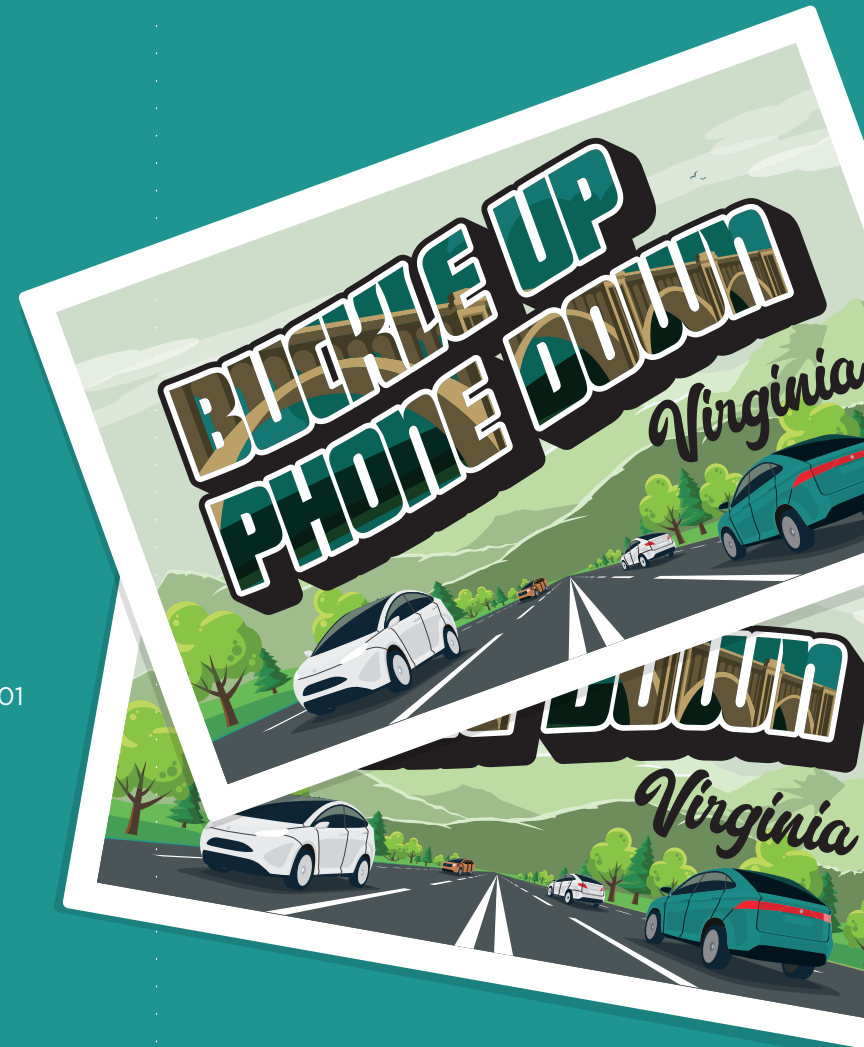
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Have a plan. It is hard to ignore your phone when it is pinging with incoming notifications. Plan to silence it, turn it off, or put it somewhere out of reach when you are driving. The temptation to reach for the phone will be easier to manage.

Download an app. Enable or download a “Do Not Disturb” app on your phone to block incoming calls or messaging while the vehicle is in motion. Many of these apps are free or low cost and send automatic replies to the message sender.

Change your voicemail. Your voicemail message can notify the caller that you are either driving or otherwise unavailable and will get back to them when it is safe to do so.

Have a strong and clear policy. Whether it is a family rule or a company policy, do not allow handheld phone use while driving. Make sure the rule is communicated clearly and that it is enforced.

Speak up. As a passenger, you have the right to request your driver stop driving distracted. You have entrusted that driver with your life, and they should respect your request.

Set the GPS. Your GPS should be situated before you start any trip. Turn the volume up loud enough so you can clearly hear the audible directions without having to look at the device.

Get your music ready. Set a playlist or station before you start the trip and don’t meddle with the music while driving.

Be a good passenger. Passengers can sometimes be a distraction themselves. Do your best to help the driver and be an extra set of eyes on the road. Offer to help the driver with directions, music, or phone interactions.

Park before eating and drinking. Before you spill your coffee or drip ketchup on your shirt, pull into a safe space to eat or drink.

Move over. If you see a vehicle on the shoulder of the road, slow down and move over. This doesn’t just apply to emergency vehicles with flashing lights. Give all of your fellow motorists space on the side of the road. If you see a crash, don’t become distracted by “rubbernecking” and cause a secondary crash!

Follow the law. It is illegal to hold a handheld personal communications device (e.g. your smartphone) while driving a moving motor vehicle in Virginia. *Find out more at phonedown.org.*

Hands-free isn’t risk free. Even if the phone isn’t in your hand, there are still dangers involved when a driver does not fully concentrate on the road. The best option is to completely avoid using the phone at all when behind the wheel.

Protect yourself. A seat belt is your best defense against a distracted driver. Make sure you and your passengers are always buckled up.

