

News Release
For Immediate Release

Making a New Year's Resolution? Why not include safe driving and become an active driver?

It is almost time to make those New Year's Resolutions. This year might be a good time to focus on one that could save your life. While all notions of self-improvement have their value, driving is one area where our actions can affect not only ourselves, but other drivers and passengers on the road. Motor vehicle crashes and fatalities are higher than they have been for many years. According to the Texas Department of Transportation, from 2019 to 2020 there has been a nearly 19% increase in fatalities on our roads. Sadly, nearly 47% of those killed were not wearing their seat belts!

"Making a resolution to drive safely in 2022 can very well mean saving a life!" said Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Community Health Educator Kay Rogers in Dallam & Hartley Counties. Some of the leading causes of traffic deaths are distracted driving, impaired driving, speeding and people not wearing seat belts. Resolve to be an 'Active Driver' in 2022. What is an Active Driver? Read below to see what an Active Driver does to protect themselves and others on the roads.

Follow these Active Driving Safety Tips:

- Minimize distractions in the vehicle. Resist activities that take your mind and eyes off the road and your hands off the wheel. Cell phones are a major distraction, but there are other distractions as well.
- Always make sure that you are alert and clear-headed. Do not drive while impaired by alcohol, over-the-counter or prescription drugs.
- Frequently scan your mirrors to be sure you know where other vehicles are and that vehicles behind you are not getting too close. It is recommended that you perform a "full mirror sweep" every 5-6 seconds.
- Maintain a proper following distance. On clear, dry roads, your following distance should be 3-4 seconds — double or triple if roads are wet or slippery, keeping in mind that in some cases it is best to stay off roads until conditions improve.
- Scan the road ahead for any possible dangers. Looking down the road ahead of you for a distance of 10 seconds. That's about one block in the city and a third of a mile.
- Watch your speed. The faster you are driving, the less time you have to react to sudden moves by other drivers and the less time other drivers have to react to you.
- Take time to recharge. If driving a long distance, it is recommended you take a break every two hours or 100 miles, even if you don't feel you need one.
- Remember to always buckle up! Seat belts will save your life!

Source: Network for Employers Traffic Safety

November 7, 2000 was the last deathless day on roadways in Texas. That means for 21 years straight, at least one person has died every single day. Help end this streak! Make 2022 the year you become an Active Driver and help save lives on our roads!