

# WisDOT: April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month

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Kaitlyn Vegter was driving to Janesville in January 2016 on a clear straight highway. She reached down to change the music on her smart phone and took her eyes off the road just for a few seconds when her life suddenly changed forever. Traveling at highway speed, her car slammed into the back of a pay loader that was turning into a farm driveway.

Defying the odds, she survived the crash but suffered extensive injuries that required her to relearn how to walk, talk and even eat. "At age 20, I was like a child who had to learn everything over," she said.

To warn others of the dangers of distracted driving, Kaitlyn told her story in a video available on the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (WisDOT) [YouTube channel](#).

"Everyone needs to realize that the catastrophic consequences of distracted driving, also known as inattentive driving, are not exaggerated and are a growing threat to everyone on the road. That's why April has been designated as National Distracted Driving Awareness Month," says David Pabst, director of the WisDOT Bureau of Transportation Safety. "Last year in Wisconsin, 113 people were killed in crashes in which at least one driver was listed as driving inattentively. In addition, 11,302 people were injured in distracted driving crashes in 2016. Fatalities from distracted crashes in 2016 increased nearly 10 percent from 2015 when 103 people

were killed. The number of people injured last year in distracted driving crashes also went up more than 6 percent from 2015 when 10,640 were injured.”

To help motivate people to pay attention behind the wheel, WisDOT will air TV, radio and online messages that creatively highlight how distracted driving is entirely preventable. The video messages, featuring a new super-villain known as the “Distractor,” also are available on [WisDOT's You Tube channel](#).

In addition, WisDOT will continue to display messages warning about the dangers of distracted driving on electronic signs on major highways.

Pabst says, “Even though you may have a busy life and routinely try to multi-task, it’s time to put a stop to distracted driving habits, which put your life and the lives of others in grave danger.”