

S.A.F.E. Newsletter

Pardon the Distraction

Distracted driving has become a deadly epidemic on our roads. Cell phone use — specifically, texting, talking, and social media use — has become the most common distraction. Other risky actions include adjusting the radio or GPS, applying makeup, eating and drinking. By driving distracted, you're robbing yourself of seconds that you may need to avoid a close call or deadly crash.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, in 2022, **distracted driving killed 3,308 people** and an estimated additional 289,310 people injured in traffic crashes involving distracted drivers. 621 nonoccupants (pedestrians, cyclists, and others) were killed in 2022 in distraction-affected traffic crashes.

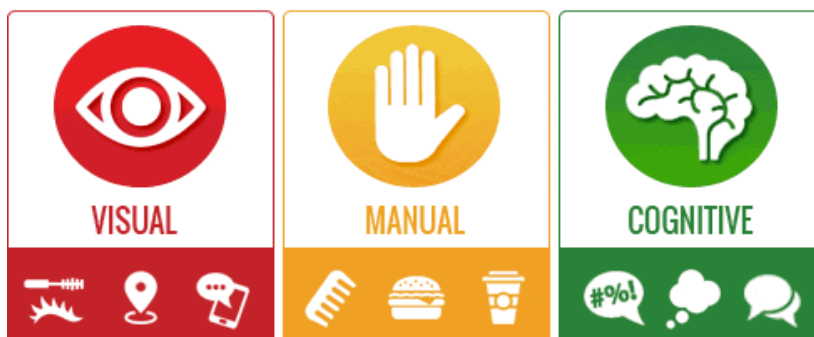
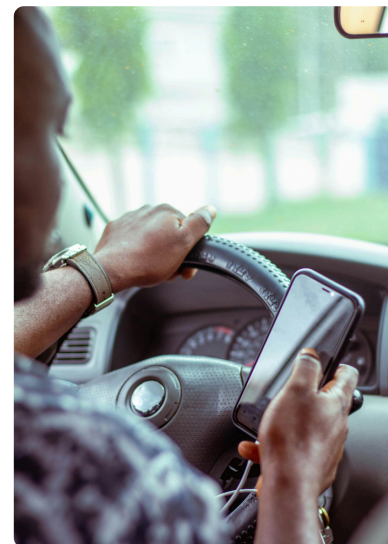
April, which is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month, is a good time to regroup and take responsibility for the choices we make when we're on the road.

Arkansas law **prohibits** the use of a hand-held cell phone for texting, typing, emailing or accessing the internet while driving, regardless of the driver's age. It is also a "primary offense" law, which means a state trooper, police officer or sheriff's deputy can initiate a traffic stop without observing any other violation. **Fines** can range from up to \$250 for a first offense and up to \$500 for any subsequent offense.

The Arkansas Highway Safety Office and NHTSA urge drivers to put their phones away when behind the wheel. **Drivers are encouraged to follow these suggestions to ensure a safe driving experience:**

- Need to send a text? Pull over and park your car in a safe location.
- Designate your passenger as your "designated texter" to respond to calls or messages.
- Do not scroll through apps while driving. Struggling not to text and drive? Activate your phone's "Do Not Disturb" feature or put the phone in the trunk, glove box, or back seat of the vehicle until you arrive at your destination.

For more information, visit <https://www.nhtsa.gov/campaign/distracted-driving> or call the Arkansas Highway Safety Office at (501) 618-8136. Also, to learn more about Arkansas' ongoing Toward Zero Deaths campaign to eliminate preventable traffic fatalities, visit www.TZDArkansas.org.



Stress... Less.



Every year, April is dedicated to observing Stress Awareness Month. This observation aims to shine a light on the negative ramifications of stress to people. While 'stress' is a term we hear about quite often in our everyday lives, we mustn't discount it as simply a buzzword. In 2023, stress remained a significant challenge for many people. For instance, about **34% of U.S. adults reported feeling completely overwhelmed** by stress on most days. Additionally, workplace stress was a major concern, with 77% of workers experiencing work-related stress.

Stress refers to worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation. When a person experiences high levels of stress repeatedly, it can lead to experiencing physiological issues such as **high blood pressure, digestive issues, sleep disorders, and fatigue** and even cause mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression.

Taking just **five minutes** a day to de-stress is crucial because it offers significant mental and physical health benefits. This brief relaxation period helps improve focus, calmness, and clarity, enhancing sleep quality, immune function, and emotional wellbeing. With 1,440 minutes in a day, dedicating five to relaxation allows you to handle daily tasks more calmly and productively.

Meditation serves as an effective tool for stress relief by promoting mindfulness and enhancing present-moment awareness. Practitioners experience increased calmness and better stress management, benefiting their day-to-day emotional well-being. Starting with simple awareness of senses helps anchor thoughts and reduces anxiety. This tool is especially helpful when coping with stress at work.

Exercise also helps relieve stress by reducing stress hormones like adrenaline and cortisol and boosting endorphins, which elevate mood and provide a sense of relaxation and optimism. It also offers a mental break, providing opportunities for solitude or social interaction, which distracts from daily worries and fosters creativity.



Engaging in **creative activities** serves as a healthy distraction, steering the mind away from stressors and toward more fulfilling endeavors. When individuals immerse themselves in creative tasks, they often experience a shift away from negative thoughts, which in turn fosters feelings of accomplishment and satisfaction. Studies have found that nearly 71% of people who participated in creativity reported positive mental health.

Stress can affect your body, thoughts, feelings, and behavior. Being able to recognize common symptoms of stress can help you manage them. The most crucial thing you can do when you are stressed or anxious is to make sure you are continuing to look after yourself. **Make time to relax when you need to and learn to say no to requests that are too much for you.**

Everyone has problems at one time or another. Problems, like people, come in all sizes, types and intensities and can come at any time. Problems sometimes start small but can grow and spread to other areas of your life. Remember that the **UAMS Employee Assistance Program** offers counseling, information and referral (if indicated) for employees, including spouses and dependents, who experience some form of personal distress. Our program also has a management consultation component that addresses workplace wellness, consultation over workplace issues, and training.

For more information on the Employee Assistance Program, including resources and appointment scheduling, visit their website, [here](#). Be well!



Earth Day

WORD SEARCH



K Y P A D Y X K E Z Y U S Q Y M
U V E G H T Y A J R E D U C E O
J N S K L I T T E R U V G H L E
D H U I L I P R E X P T Y U A B
P Y B N S I V C Y Z I C A P K W
R J D V S I Y S S A R G H N E O
E E X R A C C T P L A N E T F I
S A Y W L O U R W H P U S G H F
E R B E G R B E Y T H L B P S T
R E X K Q H B E G R G F A X A H
V U R D M A E T S A W P J N R N
E S K X Y D G R E E N N W A T F
U E F L O W E R S L A A Z S C S
K Q T O L C Q H O E T G B S O N
C H P S A Z G U L E F P U Q J D
R H K P A E W C R S A V E U H W

clean
earth
flowers
glass

grass
green
lake
litter

nature
planet
plants
preserve

recycle
reduce
reuse
save

trash
tree
waste
water