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**Safe travel this holiday season depends on you.  
Buckle up, phone down.**

**DRIVE SMART Virginia friends, traffic safety advocates and supporters:**

Are you planning to join the 43 million Americans who will travel this year for the holidays? If so we'd like to remind you to do your part and drive distraction free. We also have some traffic safety tips to share with you.



**Plan your trip in advance**

Before you leave your driveway, make sure you adjust our mirrors, tune your radio and set your GPS. Doing these things before you drive away from your home allows you to focus full time on these tasks.

**Buckle that belt**

If you are in a crash and thrown from the vehicle, you have a 75% chance of being killed. The [National Safety Council](#) estimates 165 lives may be saved simply because they chose to wear a seatbelt. Seatbelts are the safest thing you can do in your car. Everyone in the car should wear one so you all arrive at your destination safely.

### **Avoid distractions**

With the number of people traveling during Thanksgiving and Christmas, you will have enough to worry about just simply driving. So, don't add your phone into the mix.



Make your focus the primary tasks associated with driving, like steering, acceleration and braking. Here are some additional tips from [Virginia DMV](#). Remember, 80% of crashes and 65% of near crashes are caused by a distracted driving incident. The best advice: [Driving distractions can be deadly, so buckle up, phone down.](#)

### **Take care of your car**

When is the last time you checked the air in your car's tires, or changed the oil? If these things have been on your "to do" list for awhile, take care of it before the big trip. That way, if there are bigger issues, your mechanic can advise you before you have problems that delay your arrival or leave you stranded. Watch this [video](#) on winter driving tips from VDOT.



### **Don't be in a hurry**

Finally, pack your patience. You know you'll encounter lots of traffic and delays. There's always a chance the trip could take longer than expected. If possible leave early. Always be a courteous driver, avoid blaring your horn, following too closely or cutting off other drivers. You'll enjoy the trip more if you arrive relaxed and calm.

Our goal is to make Virginia's roadways the safest in the nation. We appreciate your sharing this newsletter with the people you care about.

Sincerely,

Rob Richardson

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DRIVE SMART Virginia



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