

Distracted Driving Crashes in Wisconsin

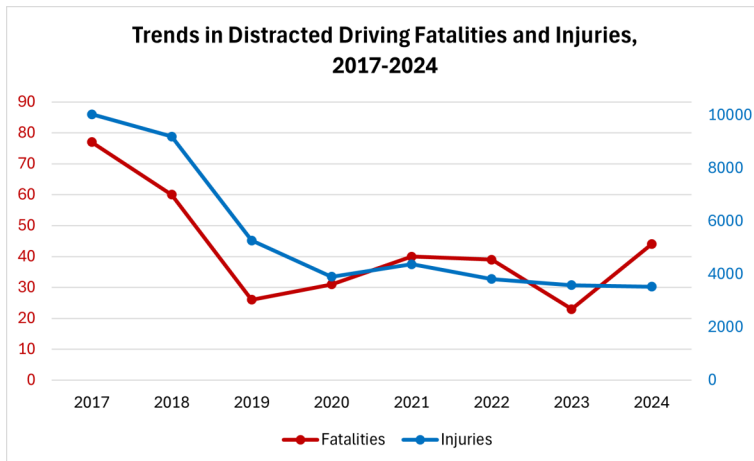


Did you know...

In Wisconsin, one person was killed or injured in a distracted driving crash every 2.5 hours in 2024.

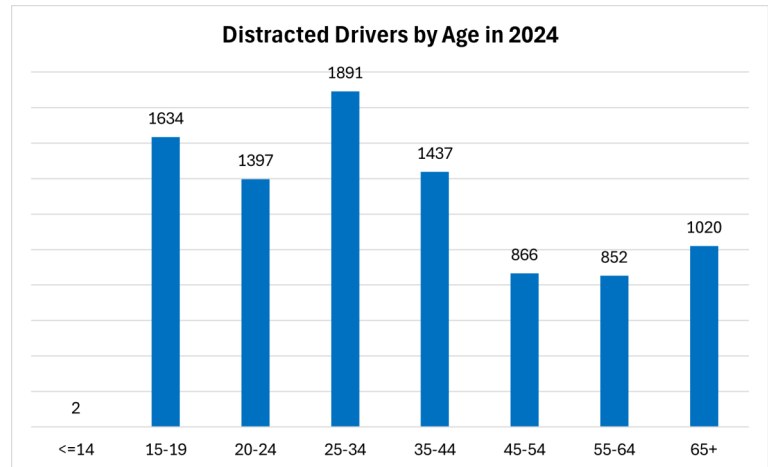
- 9,068 crashes involved distracted drivers in Wisconsin in 2024.
- In these crashes, 44 people were killed and 3,530 people were injured.
- Distracted driving contributed to 7% of all crashes and 8% of all fatalities.

Scope of the Problem



Distracted driving fatalities and injuries have been steadily declining since 2017. Injuries as a result of distracted driving have been steady since 2020. Distracted driving fatalities have fluctuated slightly in recent years. In 2024, there were 44 fatalities as a result of distracted driving. This was a 91% increase from 23 distracted driving fatalities in 2023.

Drivers aged 25-34 are more likely to be involved in a distracted driving crash than members of any other age cohort. In 2024, drivers aged 25-34 made up only 11% of all licensed drivers but accounted for 21% of all distracted drivers. Generally, distracted drivers are more likely to be younger. Distracted driving is most common among drivers under the age of 45.



Distracted Driving Crash Risk Factors

Taking your eyes off the road, even briefly, can lead to detrimental outcomes. The top distractions for distracted driving-related crashes are:

- Distraction by an outside person, object, or event.
- Using or reaching for device/object brought into the vehicle.
- Distraction by a passenger.
- Lost in thought/daydreaming.
- Adjusting audio or climate controls.

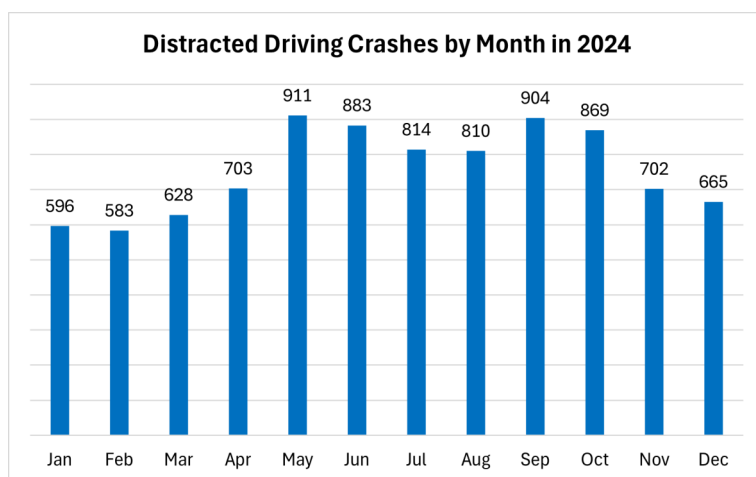
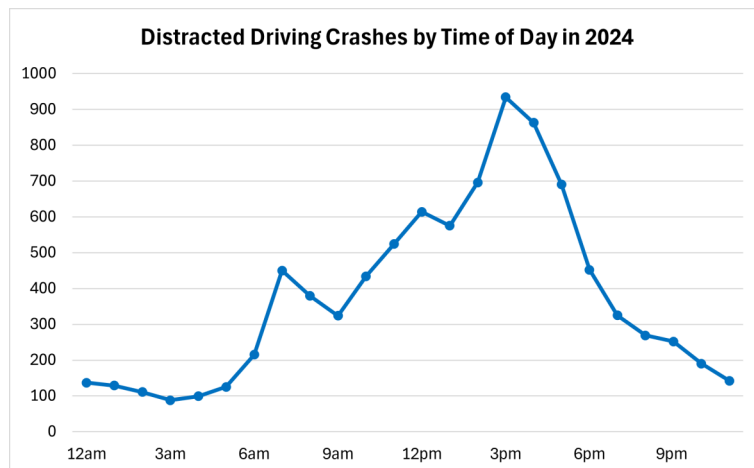
Approximately, 72% of distracted driving crashes occurred in urban areas in 2024. Urban areas can present more distraction for drivers. Drivers should concentrate on watching for pedestrians, cyclists, and other motor vehicles to avoid crashes.

About 86% of distracted driving crashes occur on dry road conditions, followed by wet road conditions with 12% of distracted driving crashes in 2024. The third most common road condition was snow, accounting for only 1% of distracted driving crashes in 2024.

When do Crashes Occur?

The peak times for distracted driving crashes is 3-4 pm with a smaller peak in the early afternoon from 12-1 pm. Over the week, these crash patterns vary. Patterns correlate with peak commute times during the week.

Friday has the highest number of distracted driving crashes followed by Tuesday. Sunday has the fewest number of distracted driving crashes in 2024.



The number of distracted driving crashes is generally consistent throughout the year. In 2024, May had the highest number of distracted driving crashes at 911. February had the lowest at 583.

The summer and fall months are subject to the highest number of distracted driving crashes when compared to other seasons. This can potentially be attributed to young drivers being out of school and the nice weather, resulting in higher numbers of less attentive drivers on the road.



Distracted Driving Laws

Distracted driving laws are defined in Wis. Stats. 346.89 (1), (3), (4), and (5):

- Drivers may not perform activities that interfere with the safe driving of their vehicle.
- Drivers may not text while the car is in motion.
- Drivers with a learner's permit or probationary license may not use their mobile phones while driving, except to report emergencies.
- Drivers may not operate or be in a position to directly observe any electronic device located within the vehicle that is activated and that is providing entertainment primarily by visual means.

What Can You Do?

- Just drive—don't try to multitask behind the wheel.
- Keep both hands on the wheel and eyes on the road.
- Be alert to your surroundings and traffic conditions.
- Don't drive while tired.
- Use caution and reduce travel speed in unfavorable weather and road conditions.
- Be alert when traveling in work zones, school zones and railway grade crossings.
- Obey speed limits and wear a safety belt to reduce the risk of being injured or killed.