

## Transcript Season 3 Episode 1: Distracted Driving Can Be Costly

**Mary Ann Kizer:** [*Car honking.*] Have you ever been involved in a “fender bender”? Accidents can be costly in more ways than one, especially for teens. 12% of deaths in people aged 15 to 19 are caused by distracted driving according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Hello, I’m Mary Ann Kizer, Jefferson County Extension Family and Consumer Sciences Agent with the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. Today my guest is

**Dot Hart:** Hello, my name is Dot Hart, Extension Wellness Ambassador and Arkansas Extension Homemakers Delta District Director and we will be discussing several aspects of distracted driving.

Podcast Opener:

*(Music playing.)* Tackle your “Adulting” To Do list with the Grown Up U: Facts for Success podcast. Keep listening as we celebrate Season 3 with podcasts to help steer you in the right direction by providing useful advice for living an independent and satisfying life as a young adult. *(Music ends.)*

Podcast Script:

**Dot Hart:** The National Highway Safety Administration defines three types of distracted driving. These can occur at the same time or independently. They are Visual – looking away from the road; Manual – Removing hands from the wheel; and Cognitive – Losing focus on your actions.

**Mary Ann Kizer:** A visual distraction could be looking at your phone for a text message or an e-mail. A manual distraction can happen when you reach for items in your car, like a purse that fell on the passenger side floor. A cognitive distraction may be getting lost in your thoughts about school, work, or “drowsy driving” when sleepy.

**Dot Hart:** If you text while driving, it can involve all three distractions - visual, manual, and cognitive - at one time. That is why the majority of 48 states ban texting while driving for all drivers. That includes sitting at a red light because the driver is still operating a vehicle.

**Mary Ann Kizer:** Distracted driving can cause slower reaction times, unnoticed speed increases, and missed road signs or stops. It can cause bodily harm, and even death. Different states have different costs for violations for distracted driving. For example, if you are going 15

miles over the speed limit in a 45-mph zone, your speeding ticket may be \$60. If it is a school or construction zone, your speeding ticket fine may increase to \$120.

**Dot Hart:** Driving under the influence of any substance, or a DUI, can lead to reckless driving violations and DUI penalties. DUI may cause decreased reaction times, increased emotional responses or road rage, and clouded judgement when it comes to safety and decision making.

**Mary Ann Kizer:** In many states, drivers younger than 21 years are under a zero-tolerance policy for driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Fines for DUI are substantially higher than fines for speeding. A fine for a first DUI may be \$200 to \$500 – plus imprisonment (from 48 hours to 30 days in a county jail) and / or losing your driver’s license from 30 to 120 days.

**Dot Hart:** Distracted driving can result in more than a traffic violation. If you are in an accident, you may suffer financial costs as well. You might damage your car or injure yourself. Depending on the severity of the accident, you could face huge costs of car repair and / or medicals bills for others injured because of your negligence. You might even need legal counsel because of your collision. Legal counsel for driving related accidents typically starts at \$1,200 or more – not including the traffic ticket fine and court fees.

**Mary Ann Kizer:** And Dot, besides all of the money involved, there is also an emotional cost of collisions, especially those involving other people. This may include passengers in your vehicle, people in another vehicle, or the family member or spouse who receives a knock on the door that a child or their spouse has been killed by someone driving under the influence or driving while texting.

**Dot Hart:** Driving violations and accidents often result in increased car insurance costs. Your insurance company might cancel safe driving benefits when you receive a traffic ticket. The increase in insurance premiums varies depending on your insurance company, age, and driving history.

**Mary Ann Kizer:** Feeling extreme emotions, such as being angry, sad, scared, anxious, stressed, or even excited, can lead to distracted driving and may alter your judgement and safety when driving. To avoid this, give yourself time to relax and calm down before getting behind the wheel. Feelings of stress or anxiety can often cause people to speed or drive recklessly. Use tools like the radio or your favorite music to help shift focus to the road and away from your feelings.

**Dot Hart:** Road trips, or driving long distances, can result in eye strain, fatigue, inattention to the road, or make you more vulnerable to distractions. Be sure to get enough rest and avoid medications that may cause drowsiness. Also, take plenty breaks and stop to rest if needed. Driving only 5 or 6 hours or 300 to 400 miles a day is recommended. Use caffeinated drinks in

moderation, cool air, and even music to help you remain alert while driving long distances. If your trip crosses state lines, be aware of that state's distracted driving laws.

**Mary Ann Kizer:** The potential costs of engaging in distracted or reckless driving are not worth the risks to your wallet, your safety, or the safety of others. If you urgently need to do anything that takes your attention off the road, that is, answer a text or phone call, eat something, or address an issue with passengers, find a place to park your car or ask a passenger to handle the issue for you.

**Dot Hart:** Always remember, the best place to focus your attention while driving is on the road.

*[Horn honking.]*

**Mary Ann Kizer:** Stay alert behind the wheel of your vehicle. For more information, check our [GrownUpU](http://www.uaex.uada.edu) website on [www.uaex.uada.edu](http://www.uaex.uada.edu) or call your local Extension Office.

### **Podcast Closer:**

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