**April Safety Focus**

**Distracted driving**

Distracted driving is one of the deadliest things we encounter on the road. The federal government reports that over 3,000 people are killed every year on U.S. roads in distracted driving crashes. A little over 8 Deaths a day. The economic toll due to distracted driving was staggering in 2014 at 46 billion dollars a year. That was the direct cost the indirect cost was over 175 billion

**What is Distraction?**

**Distraction is** having one's thoughts or attention drawn away or unable to concentrate. There are many things that demand your attention when driving and anything to interfere with that can have catastrophic consequences.

When we think of distracted driving we think of cell phones. In reality distracted driving is anything that takes our attention away from driving that includes our mental state. If you have a fight with a loved one you will be thinking more about the fight than driving. That’s a distraction. Checking out that really cool car on the other side of the street, That’s a distraction. Changing the station on the radio or changing CD’s, Yep that’s a distraction. Day dreaming about spending your lottery winnings yep that is a distraction.

We spend much of our time driving so we become complacent about what we are doing and start to feel comfortable doing things other than driving.

**Driving is an at risk situation.**

When we get in our vehicles we don’t think “what are the chances that I may die today, or will today be the day that I kill somebody”. The fact is when we get in our vehicles we perceive that we are in a safe place when actually we are in a 3,000 lb. killing machine that we have control over or in a Truck that weighs 80,000 lbs. an even bigger killing machine. Then to top it off we are travelling at 88 feet per second (60 MPH) which is longer than a truck length on average. We don’t think about that one distraction that takes our attention less than a second will put us or others at risk. Over 8 deaths every day that we don’t think about.

**How do we avoid distracted driving?**

How do we keep from being distracted while driving, we need to remove as many things as possible that take our attention away from driving. Make sure we are in a good mental state, Shut off the cell phone, Set the GPS ahead of time take away all the small things that we do not perceive to be a distractions so they won’t be. Will there be other distractions, yes there will be and we need to minimize them or at the very least we need to focus on driving instead of focusing on the distraction. We need to remember that we are not as secure in the cab of our vehicles as we think we are.