



# Just drive



## OHSP expands teen-driver campaign during National Distracted Driving Awareness Month

April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month. Its goal is straightforward: reduce traffic crashes caused by distracted drivers by educating motorists and ultimately preventing injuries and deaths associated with cell phone use, texting, and other behind-the-wheel distractions.

According to the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute ([www.michigantrafficcrashfacts.org](http://www.michigantrafficcrashfacts.org)), there were 16,543 motor vehicle crashes involving a distracted driver in 2021 in Michigan, and 59 of those crashes resulted in a fatality.

Distracted-driving crash data involving teens and young drivers is even more troubling. Only 6.7 percent of Michigan

drivers are under the age of 21, but that same group accounted for 18.1 percent of the distracted-driving crashes in 2021.

Because teen drivers have less experience on the road, becoming distracted while driving is even more dangerous.

To heighten awareness, the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) will increase the focus on teen-related outreach to help encourage them to avoid distractions and be safer drivers.

"Driving is an important responsibility that requires each person's full attention," said Katie Bower, OHSP director. "Texting while driving takes your attention off the road more

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## GHSA projection shows pedestrian fatalities rose in first half of 2022

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Drivers in the U.S. struck and killed 3,434 people in the first half of 2022—up five percent, or 168 more deaths, from the same period the year before, according to a new analysis from the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA).

This deeply troubling projection follows a 40-year high in pedestrian deaths in 2021 and continues a gruesome decade-long trend of more people dying while walking on U.S. roads.

The GHSA's annual "Spotlight on Highway Safety" report offers the first look at state and national trends in 2022 pedestrian traffic deaths based on preliminary data provided by the State Highway Safety Offices. The data analysis found that the recent increase in pedestrian deaths is even more alarming when looking back to 2019, the last pre-pandemic year. Pedestrian deaths have surged 18 percent, or 519 additional lives lost, between the first half of 2019 and 2022. Nationally, there were 1.04 pedestrian deaths per 100,000 people in 2022, up significantly from 0.90 in 2019. The data analysis was conducted by Elizabeth Petraglia, Ph.D., of the research firm Westat.

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Don't  
  
and drive.

- For teen drivers with a restricted license under Michigan's Graduated Driver Licensing program, cell phone use of any kind is against the law. Penalties include fees, fines, and possible license suspension.
- In a 2019 survey, 39% of high school students reported texting or emailing while driving during the past month.
- Sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for at least 5 seconds. At 55 mph, that's like driving the length of an entire football field with your eyes closed.

### Connect with the OHSP



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[www.youtube.com/ohsp](https://www.youtube.com/ohsp)



[www.michigan.gov/ohsp](https://www.michigan.gov/ohsp)

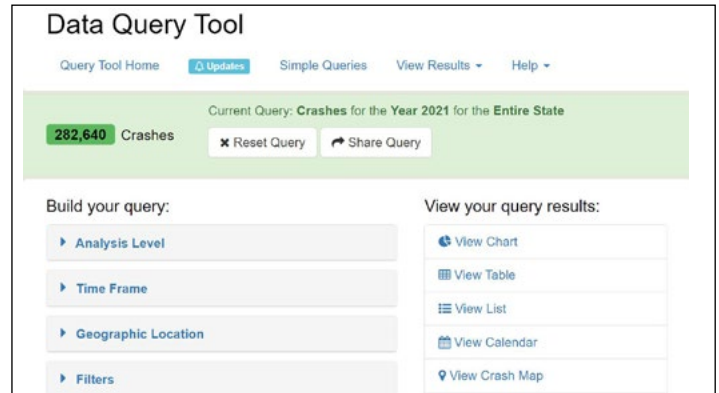
# Data query tool helps identify, analyze traffic safety issues

The Michigan Traffic Crash Facts (MTCF) data query tool is an aid for data-driven safety planning. Easy access to traffic-crash data provides the opportunity to identify and analyze problems, implement countermeasures, and evaluate impact to improve safety on Michigan roadways.

The data query tool enables people to perform advanced searches on Michigan crash data, going back to 2004. The data query tool is publicly accessible and allows anyone to build unique queries and to see the results in the form of maps, tables, lists, bar graphs, or pie charts; on a timeline or calendar; or by downloading the redacted police crash reports. Using the data query tool, it is possible to select data from a specific time frame or location in the state of Michigan.

Each year, the OHSP works with the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute to enhance the data query tool for traffic safety stakeholders. A recent enhancement added a geographic filter of Michigan tribal lands. By including tribal boundaries as a location filter in the selection list, people can easily select cases that may be relevant to tribal communities and assess the specific types of crashes occurring in those areas. Knowing the types of crashes helps identify the most important countermeasures to meet the needs of a specific community.

In addition to the geographic filter, other new features have been added to the MTCF data query tool recently. The sliding-interval feature that was added in September to the Crash Map output offers people the option to view crashes by time of day, month, or year with a sliding interval. In January, this feature was updated to provide the option to scan through the timeline automatically, if desired. This provides the ability to view



**The MTCF data query tool allows users to construct unique queries using Michigan crash data and view the results in a variety of formats. Currently, datasets are available for the years 2004 to 2021.**

different crash data patterns on a map over time.

Also, the Simple Queries section of the data query tool has been updated. A new section with queries relating to distracted driving has been added. And, in the non-motorists and impaired driving sections, “OR” queries have been added to the list of simple queries available, utilizing the recent advanced filtering enhancement.

Any questions about these new features or general MTCF questions can be directed to [mtcf-info@umich.edu](mailto:mtcf-info@umich.edu). Groups interested in scheduling a presentation of the MTCF website can contact Chelsea Thelen at [ThelenC11@michigan.gov](mailto:ThelenC11@michigan.gov) for more information.

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than any other activity, so it is vital that we educate teen drivers about keeping their hands on the wheel and their eyes on the road.”

The OHSP is encouraging high schools throughout the state to help spread the message of this important awareness month and alert their students about the dangers of distracted driving. To assist schools in this effort, the OHSP created a Distracted Driving High School Action Kit, which includes a banner, posters, brochures, a fact sheet, and sample social media posts.

In addition to the teen action kits, the OHSP is asking law enforcement agencies across the state to step up enforcement during National Distracted Driving Awareness Month. TV, radio, and social messaging that remind drivers about the

### Top distractions for teen drivers

- Teen passengers: A teen driver’s risk of dying in a crash increases with each additional teen passenger. Three or more teen passengers **QUADRUPLES** the risk.
- Eating, drinking, or smoking while driving: Eating behind the wheel can increase crash risk by 80%.
- Applying makeup or doing hair.
- Changing music on the sound system or adjusting the temperature controls.

dangers of distracted driving will also be distributed during the month of April over several media platforms.

More Michigan crash facts involving distracted driving:

- In 2021, 2,765 crashes occurred in Michigan where a motor vehicle driver was using a cell phone. Twenty-one of those crashes involved a fatality.
- A total of 2,768 motor vehicle drivers, 15 pedestrians, and 5 bicyclists were reported to be using cell phones in 2,784 crashes in 2021.
- In 2021, of the 2,768 motor vehicle drivers using cell phones, 535 (19.3 percent) were 20 years of age or younger.
- In 2021, about 37.1 percent of the crashes involving a distracted driver took place at an intersection.
- The most common crash type for distracted driving in 2021 was rear-end crashes, which accounted for 48.3 percent of distracted-driving crashes.

To learn more about distracted driving, visit OHSP’s website at [www.michigan.gov/DistractedDriving](http://www.michigan.gov/DistractedDriving).

# What do “K” and “A” indicate in traffic crash reports?

## KABCO scale helps assess crash severity

To help assess and classify vehicle crashes by injury severity, the Federal Highway Administration created the KABCO scale. The letters represent injury levels.

**Fatal Injury (K)**—A fatal injury is any injury that results in death within 30 days after the motor vehicle crash in which the injury occurred.

**Suspected Serious Injury (A)**—A suspected serious injury is any injury other than fatal that results in one or more of the following: severe laceration resulting in exposure of underlying tissues/muscle/organs or resulting in significant loss of blood; broken or distorted extremity (arm or leg); crush injuries; suspected skull, chest, or abdominal injury other than bruises or minor lacerations; significant burns (second- and third-degree burns over 10 percent or more of the body); unconsciousness when taken from the crash scene. Paralysis.

**Suspected Minor Injury (B)**—A minor injury is any injury that is evident at the scene of the crash, other than fatal or serious

injuries. Examples include lump on the head, abrasions, bruises, and minor lacerations.

**Possible Injury (C)**—A possible injury is any injury reported or claimed which is not a fatal, suspected serious, or suspected minor injury. Examples include momentary loss of consciousness, claim of injury, limping, or complaint of pain or nausea.

**No Apparent Injury (O)**—No apparent injury is a situation where there is no reason to believe that the person received any bodily harm from the motor vehicle crash. There is no physical evidence of injury, and the person does not report any change in normal function.

**K - Fatal injury:** Any injury that results in death

**A - Suspected serious injury:** Any injury other than fatal that prevents normal activities and generally requires hospitalization

**B - Suspected minor injury:** Any minor injury that is evident to others at the scene

**C - Possible injury:** Any possible injury that is reported or claimed

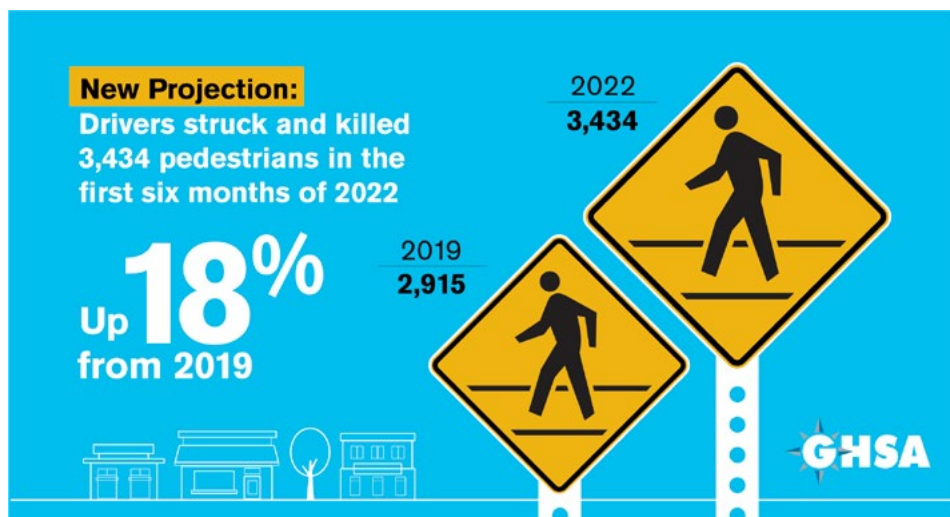
**O - No injury:** No indication

## GHSA from page 1

Why are more people who walk dying on U.S. roads? The answer involves a combination of factors, including a surge in dangerous driving that began at the start of the pandemic and has not lessened; larger, heavier vehicles that are more likely to seriously injure or kill people on foot in the event of a crash; roads designed to prioritize fast-moving traffic over slower speeds that are safer for pedestrians; and inadequate infrastructure, such as sidewalks, crosswalks, and lighting

To combat this problem, the GHSA supports a comprehensive solution based on the Safe System Approach outlined in the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Roadway Safety Strategy. The five elements of this approach—safe road users, safe vehicles, safe speeds, safe roads, and post-crash care—contribute in different but overlapping ways to provide a multilayered safety net that can protect people on foot, and other road users.

“There is a pedestrian safety crisis on our roads, and it’s only gotten worse since the start of the pandemic,” said GHSA Chief Executive Officer Jonathan Adkins. “A single roadway death is tragic. But it’s absolutely mind-boggling and heartbreaking that drivers are killing an average of 19 pedestrians every single day. The only way to reverse this awful trend



is to do more of everything that works – more and better designed infrastructure to keep people walking safe, equitable enforcement of traffic safety laws to stop dangerous driving and engaging more communities where the impacts of this crisis are felt the hardest.”

The increase in pedestrian fatalities over the first half of 2022 continues a decade-long trend of roadways being more dangerous for people on foot. Over the past ten years, pedestrian deaths in the first half of the year skyrocketed from 2,141 in 2013 to 3,434 in 2022—a 60 percent increase, or nearly 1,300 additional lives lost.

The GHSA will publish a second

comprehensive report this spring that will include state fatality projections for all of 2022, an analysis of 2021 data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Fatality Analysis Reporting System, and an overview of proven strategies states and communities are employing to reduce pedestrian crashes and injuries.

*The GHSA is a nonprofit association representing the highway safety offices of states, territories, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. The GHSA provides leadership and representation to improve traffic safety, influence national policy, and enhance program management. Their website is at [ghsa.org](https://ghsa.org).*



# How to build an OWI circumstantial evidence case

By Kinga Canike and Ken Stecker

*Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan*

A typical Operating While Intoxicated (OWI) investigation usually begins with the “vehicle in motion” phase where the officer observes the driver committing a traffic offense.

However, not all OWI investigations begin with driving. Some start when the officer observes the driver asleep or unconscious in the driver’s seat. In these cases, it will be incumbent on the prosecution to show that the defendant drove before police arrived on the scene.

In every OWI trial, the prosecution must prove the defendant operated the motor vehicle.<sup>1</sup> The Motor Vehicle Code defines “operate” as “driving or being in actual physical control of a vehicle.”<sup>2</sup> Michigan courts have held that the prosecution can prove “operation” through circumstantial evidence and reasonable inferences that arise from that evidence.<sup>3</sup>

In *People v. Solmonson*, 261 Mich. App. 657 (2004), police observed the defendant unconscious in the driver’s seat of his vehicle, which was parked on the road outside the fog line.<sup>4</sup> It was 3:45 a.m., and he had an open beer can between his legs. The engine was off but warm, and the keys were in the ignition. The defendant was alone and told police he was coming from a nearby county where he had been working. He never denied being the driver of the vehicle, and police found no one else in the area.

At trial, the defendant argued that someone else drove him to the location but offered no evidence to support his theory. A jury convicted the defendant of the OWI charge, and he appealed the conviction, arguing there was insufficient evidence to support it. The Court of Appeals held that “the jury must have concluded from the circumstantial evidence and reasonable



inferences that the prosecutor met his burden of proving the defendant was operating the vehicle in an intoxicated state *before* the police arrived.”<sup>5</sup>

In *People v. Stephen*, 262 Mich. App. 213 (2004), a police officer found the defendant at the county fairgrounds asleep in his truck, which was wedged on a parking log.<sup>6</sup> The truck’s engine was off, the transmission was in park, and the keys were in the defendant’s pocket. The defendant smelled of intoxicants and was confused. He stated that he had been drinking at a bar, had too much to drink, drove to the fairgrounds to sleep, struck the parking log while trying to leave the fairgrounds, and was unable to free his truck, so he went to sleep.

The district court granted defendant’s motion to dismiss the OWI charge on the basis that he was not “operating” the truck at the time the police officer found him asleep in it. The Court of Appeals ruled it was not necessary for the officer to have observed the defendant operating the truck for him to be arrested and prosecuted for OWI. It held that “defendant’s arrest was clearly valid because a peace officer may arrest a person without a warrant if the officer has reasonable cause to believe a misdemeanor punishable by more than ninety-two days’ imprisonment occurred, and reasonable cause to believe the person committed it.”<sup>7</sup>

Based on the above case law, an officer investigating an OWI case involving a person sleeping behind the wheel should look for—and

document—the following in his/her police report:

- Are the tires and hood warm to the touch?
- Are the keys in the ignition?
- Is the ignition switch on or off?
- Is there any other evidence to support there possibly being another driver?
- Is the individual in the vehicle behind the wheel or in the back seat?
- Is the vehicle’s transmission in drive?
- How much alcohol did the driver drink before he/she arrived at the location?
- When did the driver last drink before he/she arrived at the location?
- Did the driver have any alcohol to drink since he/she arrived at the location?
- Is the vehicle registered to the driver?

In conclusion, it is important for law enforcement to do a thorough and complete investigation so there is sufficient evidence to show the defendant was operating a vehicle while intoxicated before police arrived. This allows prosecutors to prove their cases in court and hold these dangerous drivers accountable for their actions.

*Views expressed in this article are solely those of the authors. Please consult your prosecutor, local counsel, or commanding officers if you need any further guidance.*

For more information on the Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan Traffic Safety Training Program, contact Ken Stecker at [steckerk@michigan.gov](mailto:steckerk@michigan.gov) or Kinga Canike at [canikek@michigan.gov](mailto:canikek@michigan.gov).

<sup>1</sup> M Crim JI 15.2

<sup>2</sup> MCL. 257.35a

<sup>3</sup> *People v. Haggerty*, No. 303646 (Mich. App.) (Decided on September 27, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> *People v. Solmonson*, 261 Mich. App. 657 (2004).

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* at 663.

<sup>6</sup> *People v. Stephen*, 262 Mich. App. 213 (2004).

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* at 219.

## Schools across Michigan participating in teen safe-driving program

### Strive for a Safer Drive in its twelfth year

Students at 36 Michigan high schools will have the opportunity to become better, safer drivers by participating in the Strive for a Safer Drive (S4SD) program. As a peer-led traffic safety initiative, S4SD aims to reduce the leading

**S4SD**  
STRIVE 4 A SAFER DRIVE

In 2021, there were 483,132 licensed drivers aged 15 to 20, which represented 6.7 percent of all Michigan drivers. However, that same age group had 103 traffic fatalities, accounting for 9.1 percent of all traffic deaths in Michigan. Inexperience and risk-taking behavior are the primary factors contributing to teen-driver fatalities.

cause of death for teens—traffic crashes.

In its twelfth year, S4SD is a public-private partnership between Ford Motor Company Fund's Driving Skills for Life program and the OHSP. The program encourages teens to talk with their peers and their communities about making safe-driving choices.

As part of S4SD, each school receives \$1,000, which students use to create a teen-led campaign that will educate their classmates and community about various traffic safety topics, including speeding; seat belts; pedestrian, bicyclist, and passenger safety; and impaired, distracted, nighttime, and winter driving.

Schools will submit videos or PowerPoint presentations outlining their campaigns. The top-five schools judged to have winning campaigns will receive cash prizes ranging from \$500 to \$1,500.

Since the 2011 creation of S4SD, 185 different high schools have participated in the program. The OHSP has partnered with the Transportation Improvement Association to coordinate activities of the S4SD program. For more information, visit [www.Michigan.gov/S4SD](http://www.Michigan.gov/S4SD).



### S4SD schools 2022-2023, by county

Allegan:	Otsego High School
Bay/Arenac:	Bay-Arenac Career Center
Berrien:	Brandywine High School
Branch:	Coldwater High School
Calhoun:	Harper Creek High School
Clare:	Clare-Gladwin Regional Education Service District:
	- Beaverton High School
	- Clare High School
	- Farwell High School
	- Gladwin High School
	- Harrison High School
Gratiot:	Fulton High School
Ingham:	Wilson Talent Center
Macomb:	Dakota High School
	DiAnne M. Pellerin Center
	Lake Shore High School
	Warren Mott High School
Mason:	West Shore ESD – Career & Technical Education Center
Midland:	Dow High School
Monroe:	Dundee High School
Oakland:	Lake Orion High School
	University High School
Ontonagon:	Ontonagon Area Schools
Saginaw:	Freeland High School
Sanilac:	Croswell-Lexington High School
	Sandusky High School
St. Clair:	Anchor Bay High School
	Memphis Sr. High School
	Port Huron Northern High School
Tuscola:	Vassar High School
Washtenaw:	Dexter High School
Wayne:	Carlson High School
	Cesar Chavez Academy High School
	Detroit Communications & Media Arts High School
	Fordson High School
	Plymouth High School
	Southeastern High School

## Fiscal Year 2024 federal grant proposal submissions due March 31

The fiscal year 2024 open grant project solicitation at OHSP will be closing soon. The deadline for submitting proposals is Friday, March 31, 2023. Grant project proposals must be completed and submitted in the Michigan Grants System (MGX) by the due date.

Video recordings of the training sessions on the submission process are available on the OHSP website. Anyone wishing to submit a proposal is encouraged to review the process and procedure information and to reach out to an OHSP coordinator for assistance.

Project proposals may be for one, two, or three years of



funding and should provide information for the whole grant period requested. All information on approved proposals will be automatically moved into the grant application in MGX between July 1 and August 4, 2023. Approved grant projects can begin activity on October 1, 2023.

The goal of the open solicitation process is to reduce barriers to federal grant funding for behavioral traffic safety projects and to be more equitable by working with local communities that may not have been funded in the past.

For more information, visit [www.michigan.gov/OHSPgrants](http://www.michigan.gov/OHSPgrants).

# INSIDE THE OHSP

## OHSP CAMPAIGN CALENDAR

Date	Event
April 1-30	National Distracted Driving Month
May 15-June 4	Click It or Ticket
July 1-30	Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over
Aug. 10-Sept. 4	Bicycle Safety Enforcement
July 1-30	Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over
Sept. 17-23	Child Passenger Safety Week



**163** MICHIGAN DEATHS  
AS OF MARCH 14, 2023

**Reminder:**  
The deadline to submit  
FY24 OHSP project  
proposals is March 31

For information, visit:  
[www.michigan.gov/OHSPgrants](http://www.michigan.gov/OHSPgrants)



**APRIL IS NATIONAL  
DISTRACTED DRIVING AWARENESS MONTH**

## OHSP VIDEO FILES

The OHSP has produced a short animated piece that is currently playing on gas pumps across Michigan as part of its winter safe-driving campaign.

View the video [here](#).



## OHSP WELCOMES

**Quinn Passmore** is the OHSP's new Vulnerable Roadway Users program coordinator.

Before joining the OHSP, Quinn worked in the Attorney General's office on its Public Information and Education team. Prior to that, she stayed home to raise her three children until they were in school, during which time she attended Baker College, earning a bachelor of arts degree in criminal justice and psychology.

Quinn was born and raised in Elsie, Michigan, growing up next door to her future husband. She is the president of the Elsie Dairy Festival and serves on various community boards in Ovid-Elsie.

Quinn lives with her husband, Joel, and their children, Piper (15), Darby (13), and Dugan (7). They also have two dogs, three cats, and a bunny, as well as various critters the family rehabs each spring.

In her free time, Quinn enjoys getting lost on a trail riding her utility vehicle or getting stuck in the mud. She likes building miniatures, mastering crosswords, baking, and making crafts. She is easily distracted by cats and cat stories.

**Angela Lamphere** recently joined the OHSP as the new program coordinator for the distracted-driving, teen, aging driver, and school bus

safety programs.

Before starting with the division, Angela worked in the Director's Office within the Michigan State Police (MSP). Prior to coming to MSP, she worked 22 years with the Michigan Department of Corrections, including in an administrative support role, and as a dental assistant.

She was raised in Ionia and still resides there with her husband, Griff; daughter, Katelyn; and their dog, Olive. Angela enjoys spending time at her family cottage, being outside, and watching her daughter swim.

**Amber Hignite** joins OHSP as its new Federal Programs Accountant.

Before starting with the division, Amber worked at GreenStone Farm Credit Services in its legal department. Prior to that, she was active-duty Navy for six years before earning her bachelor's degree at Davenport University.

Amber recently moved into a new house in Mason with the family's homestead/tiny farm dream in mind. She is the mother to five children, four boys and one girl, and loves spending time with her family.