

One text. One second. One mistake.

A lot of things can happen in just one second; 4 babies are born, 20,000 cans of coca cola are sold, earth travels 18.5 miles, and someone's life can be changed forever. All it takes is one second of distracted driving to have a fatal accident. In one second, a car moving only 40 mph travels 58.8 feet, the equivalent to the height of a five story building! When learning to drive, you develop a certain level of care and attentiveness. Being on the road for the first time can be scary, as it should. Whether it has been six months or six years as a driver though, the attention put towards the road should be at its absolute most. The level of caution possessed the first time you put your hand on the wheel should be the same every single time after that. When I first learned how to drive, I firmly gripped the wheel and my eyes remained straight on the road in front of me. I couldn't possibly glance as much as to even look at the person in the passenger's seat. When I passed cars however, I noticed other drivers glancing down at their phone, turning their heads to search for a charger, and looking at their burger they were about to take a bite out of. I didn't know whether to be impressed by their multitasking skills, or concerned by their lack of full attention to driving. I was unsure as to where the line was drawn between being a comfortable & experienced driver vs. being a distracted & reckless driver. It wasn't until one afternoon that this answer became very clear to me. I was driving along the usual road that takes me home from school. It is fairly straight, not very busy with cars, and the speed is 50 mph. As I was driving on my daily route, I noticed a car about 100 feet away approaching from the other direction. The car may have seemed to be driving fast, but other than that, everything was normal. As it neared me however, the car suddenly veered to the left and nearly skimmed the side of my car. I flinched as we passed, and was shocked that the car so quickly jerked out of control. I continued on driving though, slightly startled, but fine. I soon heard a loud screech, and in my rearview mirror I came to see that the car had veered off into the ditch on the side of the road behind me. I later found out that this accident was caused by texting while driving and simultaneously being startled by roadkill. Although the driver was ok from crashing into the ditch, I couldn't help but think of what would happen if that driver had lost control of the wheel a little sooner. Fortunately we never collided and my situation did not turn into what could have been a fatal crash. At that moment I realized, I could be doing everything right while driving, but all it takes is one person to ruin the others' life. Don't be that person. Don't be the one distracted. Be the one accounting for every second.