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### Water District Drivers Test Skills In Simulator

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## Employees Shown Dangers Of Texting While Driving

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**CINCINNATI** -- Nearly 200 of the 700 traffic deaths last year in Kentucky can be attributed to distracted drivers, officials said.

But one government agency is using a video game to improve driver safety.



Megan Scholten, of the Northern Kentucky Water District, drives a lot for her job collecting water sample. She tested her skills behind the wheel of a driving simulator intended to teach drivers better concentration skills.

"It reminds me not to answer my phone or anything, wait until I get to a safe place to answer or text," Scholten said. "Nothing is that important."

Water district employees were required to try the simulator to show the dangers of distracted driving.

"I didn't even notice the stop sign while I was texting and driving," Scholten said. "I didn't notice the stop sign and it took me forever to stop."

Brad Murphy, safety coordinator for the water district, said the simulator was helpful because many drivers think they can use text messaging while behind the wheel.

"They drive on the simulator and the results aren't very good," Murphy said.

The chances of wrecking jump 23 percent while a driver is texting, and talking on the phone can also create a hazard.

"It's three words and you're gone; who cares if someone is wondering where you're at?" said T.J. Vogelpohl, of the water district.

He said he'll think twice about texting or answering the phone while driving.

"I'll definitely pay a little bit more attention," Vogelpohl said. "I mean it's a 10th of a second; it's a matter of life and death."

It's illegal in Kentucky to text message while driving.

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