



Arbella Insurance Foundation Recommits to Distractology® Program

Anti-distracted driving program shown to decrease accident rates by 19 percent for participating drivers

QUINCY, Mass. — March 9, 2016 — Responding to the mounting issue of distracted driving and the high demand from local schools, the [Arbella Insurance Foundation](#) has recommitted to its [Distractology](#) tour for an additional five years. The program — one of the first in the country to address distracted driving with young, inexperienced drivers — is relaunching this week with updated training scenarios and an eye-catching new look. To date, more than 11,000 teenagers have completed the Distractology training. Drivers who have completed Distractology are proven to be 19 percent less likely to have an accident and 25 percent less likely to get traffic violations*.

Teens have the highest crash rate of any group in the United States. A 2015 study by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found that distraction was a factor in nearly six out of ten moderate-to-severe teen crashes. Adding to the urgency of this issue, auto fatality rates are the highest they have been in nearly a decade. Research from the National Safety Council found a 14 percent jump in auto-related deaths in the first six months of 2015, compared to the previous year.

Introduced in 2010, the Distractology campaign features a 36-foot-long, mobile classroom outfitted with high-tech driving simulators. The classroom travels to high schools across New England and leads students through a variety of true-to-life distracted driving scenarios, educating participants to anticipate hidden hazards, react to the road and avoid accidents. For the relaunch, the scenarios have been updated to include distractions created by smartphones, streaming music, and food and drink, in both residential and highway conditions. The original driving simulations created by the University of Massachusetts Amherst (UMass Amherst) Human Performance Lab are still used as they are as applicable as ever.

“Though laws have been put in place and drivers are aware of the dangers, we are more tethered to our phones than ever before, making distracted driving more common and a bigger threat to the safety of our communities,” said John Donohue, chairman, president and CEO of the Arbella Insurance Group, and chairman of the Arbella Insurance Foundation. “Arbella’s Foundation is proud to have been one of the first to tackle distracted driving, and we’re excited to continue to offer Distractology to the newest wave of young drivers.”

So far, the Distractology tour has visited more than 120 towns in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island and New Hampshire. More than 100 high schools have participated and the program is already booked through the end of the year due to popularity. Ninety-six percent of students who participated in the program would recommend it to their friends — a strong indication of the impact Distractology is having on students.

In addition to the newly created simulations, Arbella’s Foundation is debuting new Distractology imagery. The interior and exterior of the mobile classroom will feature striking graphics of drivers whose heads have morphed into the distractions that consume them. The images illustrate the way distractions, like phones, food and drink, and the radio, can take full control of drivers’ minds, diverting their attention from the road. These images reflect the new tagline: “Don’t let distractions take over.” The [Distractology.com](#) website, where program participants complete an online portion of the curriculum, has been revamped as well. The website will now feature a teacher’s portal, where teachers can find activity ideas, videos and discussion questions that offer ways to connect the Distractology visit to their lessons. The Distractology online

curriculum and simulator are based on Arbella Insurance Foundation-funded research conducted by UMass Amherst.

"Motor vehicle crashes continue to be the leading cause of death among 16-19 year-olds in the United States, and their risk of being involved in a fatal crash is almost three times higher than drivers aged 20 and older," said Dr. Donald L. Fisher, professor and former department head of the College of Engineering, UMass Amherst, and national expert on distracted driving. "We created a simulator that mimics real life distracted driving and educates young drivers about the hazards of this dangerous behavior. By participating in the training, new drivers can be better equipped at anticipating hazards and abstaining from dangerous behavior."

Distractology will travel to various communities in Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island during 2016, offering 45 minutes of simulated driving to each participant. Members of Arbella's network of more than 500 independent insurance agents volunteer their time hosting the training in their own communities. The program is funded by the Arbella Insurance Foundation, making the training free for students. To find out when the Distractology tour is coming to a community near you, visit www.Distractology.com.

About the Arbella Insurance Group and the Arbella Insurance Foundation

Established in 1988, the Arbella Insurance Group (www.arbella.com) is a company with more than \$700M in revenue with approximately \$1.3B in assets, headquartered in Quincy, Massachusetts. Arbella is a customer-focused regional property and casualty insurance company, providing personal and business insurance in Massachusetts and Connecticut, and business insurance in Rhode Island and New Hampshire. Arbella Insurance Group founded the Arbella Insurance Foundation in 2004. The mission of Arbella's Foundation is to engage in activities and to support not-for-profit organizations that have a significant positive impact on the people and communities served by Arbella.

** Results are based upon data obtained from Arbella Mutual Insurance Company's youthful operators who took the Distractology training when compared to those who did not from 2010 through 2014.*

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For more information:

Christine Williamson
Greenough, for the Arbella Insurance Foundation
617-275-6528
cwilliamson@greenough.biz

