Workplace Distractions Fatality File

Kira Hudson was driving, but her attention was on her phone conversation. She was arguing with her boyfriend, with one hand on the phone and one on the wheel as she turned onto tree-lined Mill Creek Road near SR-38 in Hamilton County.

She remembers so many things about that day, including “1, 2 Step” playing on the radio and the deserted road ahead of her. But she can’t remember what exactly she and her boyfriend were arguing about. Yet, as the then-20-year-old drove down that road on Jan. 31, 2005, she was laser-focused on her call.

Movement caught her eye – a squirrel in the middle of the road. She was only driving about 20 mph (32 km/h), but instead of slowing down as she normally would, she panicked.

Still clutching the phone, she cranked the wheel to the right with way too much force. She dropped her phone to grab the wheel with both hands, turning quickly to the left. Hudson rapidly corrected to the right. The car flipped.

The car landed on the driver’s side, facing the opposite direction of traffic. The top of the car caved into a row of trees. Hudson was pinned down, the roof collapsing above her.

Later, the doctors told her she would never walk again.