



Distracted Driving

Presented by: Wheeler & Taylor Insurance

Learning Objectives

- During this training presentation, participants will learn about:
 - What distracted driving is
 - The different types of distracted driving
 - Tips for staying focused on the road
 - How to remain focused on the road and how to avoid an accident

What Is Distracted Driving?

- While a number of factors can lead to a crash (e.g., impaired driving, poor road conditions and adverse weather), distracted driving is a common, preventable cause of accidents.
- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) defines distracted driving as any activity that diverts a person's attention away from driving.



What Is Distracted Driving (Continued)?

- When it comes to distracted driving, there are a variety of laws to keep in mind:
 - Handheld devices are banned for commercial motor vehicle driving.
 - Some states and municipalities have banned handheld phones. Others have gone an additional step by also not allowing hands-free devices.
- However, even if you're driving in areas that allow the use of cellphones while driving, it presents a significant risk.

What Is Distracted Driving (Continued)?

- Data from the NHTSA indicates that, each year, up to 391,000 people are injured and 3,450 people are killed in crashes involving distracted drivers.
- While texting and taking phone calls while driving are major causes of accidents, they aren't the only distractions to be aware of. Distracted driving can be broken down into the following three categories:
 1. Taking your eyes off of the road (visual distractions)
 2. Taking your hands off of the wheel (physical distractions)
 3. Taking your mind off of driving (cognitive distractions)

Visual Distractions

- Visual distractions are any distractions that take your eyes off the road.
- Common visual distractions include:
 - Using electronic devices such as a GPS, audio player, radio, cellphone or laptop
 - Eating, drinking or smoking
 - Focusing attention on visual distractions outside the vehicle, such as collisions, police activity, street signs, pedestrians, construction or billboards



Physical Distractions

- Physical distractions are any distractions that cause a driver to take their hands off the wheel of a vehicle.
- Common physical distractions include:
 - Eating/drinking
 - Talking on handheld phone
 - Reaching into the passenger seat or back seat to grab an item
- Without both hands on the wheel, it's very difficult to control a vehicle. This can also affect your reaction time, increasing the odds of a crash.

Cognitive Distractions

- Cognitive distractions are any distractions that cause a driver to think about something other than driving.
- Common cognitive distractions include daydreaming or multitasking.
- Cognitive distractions are especially dangerous, as drivers often have a false sense of security. In their mind, they have their hands on the wheel and therefore aren't driving distracted.

Multiple Distractions

- Some distractions may involve more than one type of distraction at once.
- For instance, texting and driving can take both your eyes and mind off the road.
- It takes an average of five seconds to read or send a text. During that time, a vehicle going 55 miles per hour can travel the length of a football field.



Prevention Tips

Know Your Vehicle

- Taking the time to learn the ins and outs of your vehicle can reduce the need to take your eyes off the road. For instance, drivers should know where their windshield wipers switch is. That way, in a storm, they don't need to take their eyes off the road to find the switch.
- If the vehicle you're in is not yours (e.g., rented vehicles), take the extra time to get to know the car before you hit the road.



Plan Ahead

- Make any necessary adjustments **BEFORE** you drive. This can involve:
 - Adjusting your rearview and side mirrors
 - Choosing your music
 - Answering any important texts or emails
 - Eating
- Minimize the potential for distractions by planning your routes. Research your drive ahead of time to eliminate the need for GPS, maps and other navigation tools.

Avoid Temptation

- To help eliminate the urge to use cellphones and other devices, turn them off and stow them out of sight in a safe compartment.
- It's also beneficial install an application on your cellphone that recognizes when your vehicle is in motion and responds to texts and calls with a preset safety message. Some phones have this functionality built in.



Avoid Multitasking

- When behind the wheel, your job is to drive safely. As part of this responsibility, and for your own safety, do not do anything that distracts you from the road.
- While you drive, actively scan the road, using your mirrors to watch out for other vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.
- If you need to make a phone call or respond to a text message on the road, pull over beforehand. Even the use of a hands-free device is dangerous and can create a cognitive distraction.
- Plan your meals in advance and avoid eating while you drive.

Be A Good Passenger

- If you are a passenger in a vehicle, do your part:
 - Don't be the cause of a distraction.
 - Speak up if the driver is being distracted.
 - Do things on behalf of the driver. This can including adjusting the music, setting up navigation systems and answering phone calls and text messages.

Summary

- Distractions come in a variety of forms. It's not enough to have your hands on the wheel and eyes on the road—your mind must be on the task at hand too.
- To remain safe on the road, keep in mind the prevention tips outlined in this presentation and follow all Michael V Diaz policies regarding the use of company vehicles.



For More Information

For more information regarding distracted driving or other safety issues, please contact:

Wheeler & Taylor Insurance

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