



Distracted driving: Is it worth it?

April is the National Safety Council's distracted driving month, which was created to recognize the dangers of and to eliminate preventable deaths from distracted driving. The Texas Department of Transportation states in 2017, distracted driving resulted in 444 deaths and 2,889 injuries. Don't be part of the statistic; be part of the solution. Whether you drive for work or not, it's important to keep your mind on driving instead of your phone, other activities or even passengers in the vehicle. Distracted driving endangers not only a driver's life, but everyone else on the road as well.

Contrary to popular belief, cell phones are not the only distractions. Any activity that has the potential to divert a driver from the primary task of driving is considered distracted driving. Eating, grooming, talking to a passenger or using navigation also causes us to take our mind and eyes off the road. There are three types of distractions:

Visual: Anything that takes your eyes off the road.

Manual: Anything that takes your hands off the wheel.

Cognitive: Anything that takes your mind off the primary task of driving.

Luckily, there are several steps you can take to keep your complete focus on the road.

Prepare to drive: Before you get in the car, make sure you clear your mind of distractions. It can help to jot down anything on your mind either on a pad of paper or your phone so that you aren't trying to remember it while you drive. Make sure you are well rested and prepared for some windshield time.

Limit cell phone usage: Follow your company's driving safety policy whenever you drive for work. Inform customers, managers or anyone else who might contact you that you are on the road and will return their call when you are safely stopped. Remove or limit other distractions in the car. Remember, hands free is not distraction free. Whenever you are using the phone, you are taking your mind off the primary task of driving.

Drive defensively. Keep your mind, eyes and ears on the road. Scan the road ahead, anticipate other motorists and pedestrians' actions while you are driving. Make sure to use your mirrors to check around your vehicle, and plan escape routes so that you are prepared for stopped vehicles

Commit to distraction free driving. You cannot always ensure that you have a distraction free driving zone, but you can make a commitment to yourself and your employer that you will strive for a safer driving environment. This means putting down the phone, limiting distractions and taking accountability for your actions.

Remember, when you are behind the wheel, your primary job is driving. Make sure you understand and follow your company's driving policy and ask your supervisor if you have any questions. The key to staying safe behind the wheel is staying focused. Make sure that you avoid any activities that take any amount of attention away from the road and that you drive defensively.



Discussion questions

1. What is distracted driving?
2. What are the three types of distractions?
3. You are not distracted when using a hands free device while driving. True or false?
4. What are some activities that could distract you while driving?
5. What is your company's driving policy?

Answers

1. Distracted driving is any activity that can divert a driver from the primary task of driving.
2. The three types of distractions are manual, visual and cognitive.
3. False. Using a hands free device still takes your mind off the primary task of driving and is not any safer.
4. Answers will vary. Some distractions are talking, texting, using navigation and grooming.
5. Answers will vary. This is a good time to go over your driving policy with your employees.

Meeting note:

Employee comments/concerns: _____

Other safety issues to be addressed on the job/facility: _____

Training record:

Date: _____ Jobsite/Facility: _____
 Trainer: _____ Title: _____

Employee name (print)	/ (signature)	Employee name (print)	/ (signature)
_____	/	_____	/
_____	/	_____	/
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