



TRIP

Truckers Risk Improvement Process

Distracted Driving

Driving is a serious responsibility; it demands and deserves your full, undivided attention. What is a distraction? It's anything that takes your hands, eyes, or attention away from driving. It could be a billboard, passengers in your car, something going on outside your car or even something as simple as trying to set the speed of your windshield wipers. Of course, you have to occasionally glance at your speedometer, fuel and other gauges. But actions like changing the radio station, dialing a cell phone, reading a map, or using a navigation system while you're driving can lead to big trouble. In fact, one recent study showed that driver distractions are a contributing factor in more than 4,300 crashes a day. Among the most common driving distractions are:

- Adjusting the radio, or CD player
- Other occupants in the vehicle
- Moving objects in the vehicle
- Using/dialing a wireless phone
- Eating and drinking while driving
- Personal grooming
- Adjusting the vehicle's temperature controls
- Smoking while driving

- Outside distractions, including:
 - Accidents
 - Vehicles stopped by police
 - Friends in other vehicles
 - Roadside advertising
 - New construction (shops, restaurants, etc.)

Mobile Phones:

Using a wireless phone while driving increases your chance of getting into an accident by 400%. When you're searching for a number, dialing, or talking, you're not watching the road like you should. "Hands-free" phone features help, but they can't prevent you from becoming involved in a conversation and losing concentration.

A survey of 837 drivers with cell phones found that almost half swerved or drifted into another lane, 23% had tailgated, 21% cut someone off and 18% nearly hit another vehicle while using the phone.

So, what can you do? How can you be a safe driver if you absolutely must use your phone while traveling? Wireless phone manufacturers suggest several good options:

- Pull off the road and stop in a safe place before using your phone.
- When the phone rings, let it ring! It's better to use your phone's voicemail or even miss a call than to put yourself, your passengers, or others at risk.
- Become very familiar with your phone before using it on the road.
- Never take notes or jot down numbers while driving.

Remember: driving safely is always more important than using the phone.

Dashboard Dinning- A Crash Diet:

From breakfast burritos to burgers and fries, eating on the run has turned into an everyday part of our lives. Who hasn't done it? French fries on your lap, a drink in one hand and a sandwich in the other while your knees do the steering. Eating while driving is not only dangerous, it's messy, and fumbling with napkins, condiments, wrappers and beverages means you're not watching the road.

Here are a few ways you can concentrate more on the road than on your burger:

- Leave a little early. Allow your-self time to stop for a bite to eat.
- If you're traveling with someone, take turns driving and eating.

Turning Knobs- Turing Your Head:

Radio station buttons, CD and cassette controls, volume, balance and fade, A/C and heat knobs, fan speed, cruise control...

Those are just some of the knobs, switches, buttons and controls you can adjust, switch on or off and turn up and down while driving, and they all help make travel more comfortable and more fun.

You may think all the adjusting and changing is routine – after all, you've been doing it since you got your license. But inserting a CD or searching for a radio station makes you six times more likely to get into an accident than glancing at the fuel gauge or speedometer.

Don't Let Technology Take a Toll

Some technology – like anti-lock brakes and traction control – has helped make driving safer. Other new technology, though, can cause you to take your mind and your eyes off the road.

There's a whole new generation of in-car electronic gadgets – called "telematics" – designed to make life in the car more convenient and more comfortable. Wireless phones, alphanumeric pagers and other "messaging" devices, mobile Internet and hand-held computers all fall into this category, and many newer cars even have on-board navigation and night-vision systems.

But as communication and navigation technology becomes more and more common in vehicles, companies and even local and state governments are taking steps to increase safety. Some systems cannot be programmed while the vehicle is in motion. Voice- activated systems are being developed. And new laws are being considered in many places to limit what devices may be used while driving.

Think about it; let's say you're going 60 miles per hour. If you look down for just two seconds to choose a CD or adjust the climate controls, you'll have traveled 176 feet blindly. That's more than half the length of a football field. Try these tips to help keep your attention on the road:

- Ask your passenger to adjust the radio or climate controls for you.
- Take advantage of normal stops to adjust controls.
- With more complex devices – GPS/navigation systems, etc. – take the time to stop in a safe place before giving them your attention.

External Distractions- Looks Can Kill: Rubber Necking

It's just human nature – the urge to “get a good look” at the scene of an accident or at cars that have been stopped by police can be almost overwhelming. And who can resist a long look at what they're putting in at the new shopping center? The best advice: Don't do it! Those things are never more important than staying focused on driving.

Remember, letting your concentration be diverted by these common driving distractions can be deadly:

- Roadside activities such as accidents or vehicles stopped by police
- Friends in other vehicles
- Roadside advertising
- Construction areas

The safe solution is simple: never do any of these things while you're driving!

How To Keep Your Concentration

Are you always prepared to avoid a car swerving in front of you? How about braking for a pedestrian who suddenly steps into your path? Can you steer safely clear of debris falling from a truck? Stay focused. Pay attention. Expect the unexpected. And follow these simple tips to help you – and others – stay alive:

- Always be sure you and your passengers are properly buckled up.
- Get plenty of sleep; never drive while drowsy.
- Avoid aggressive drivers.
- Do not tailgate.
- Allow sufficient time to reach your destination.

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