Distracted Driving Prevention Meeting Kit

WHAT IS DISTRACTED DRIVING?

Distracted driving is any activity that diverts attention from driving, including talking or texting on your phone, eating and drinking, talking to people in your vehicle, fiddling with the stereo, entertainment or navigation system – anything that takes your attention away from the task of safe driving.

Texting is the most alarming distraction. Sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for 5 seconds. At 55 mph, that's like driving the length of an entire football field with your eyes closed.

EMPLOYEES NEED TO KNOW CAUSES OF DISTRACTED DRIVING

Driving distractions aren't limited to the use of a mobile phone. Eating, surfing the internet, changing radio stations, and grooming are other examples that also put drivers at risk of getting into an accident. Here are some causes of distracted driving:

- Phone calls
- Texting
- Surfing the internet
- Eating and drinking
- Reading
- Adjusting the radio
- Putting on makeup
- Shaving

TIPS FOR PREVENTING DISTRACTED DRIVING

1. **Fully focus on driving.** Do not let anything divert your attention, actively scan the road, use your mirrors and watch out for pedestrians and cyclists.
2. **Store loose gear, possessions and other distractions** that could roll around in the car, so you do not feel tempted to reach for them on the floor or the seat.
3. **Make adjustments before you get underway**. Address vehicle systems like your GPS, seats, mirrors, climate controls and sound systems before hitting the road. Decide on your route and check traffic conditions ahead of time.
4. **Finish dressing and personal grooming at home** – before you get on the road.
5. **Snack smart.** If possible, eat meals or snacks before or after your trip, not while driving. On the road, avoid messy foods that can be difficult to manage.
6. **Secure children and pets before getting underway.** If they need your attention, pull off the road safely to care for them. Reaching into the backseat can cause you to lose control of the vehicle.
7. **Put aside your electronic distractions.** Don’t use cell phones while driving – handheld or hands-free – except in absolute emergencies. Never use text messaging, email functions, video games or the internet with a wireless device, including those built into the vehicle, while driving.
8. **If you have passengers,** enlist their help so you can focus safely on driving.
9. **If another activity demands your attention,** instead of trying to attempt it while driving, pull off the road and stop your vehicle in a safe place. To avoid temptation, power down or stow devices before heading out.
10. **As a general rule,** if you cannot devote your full attention to driving because of some other activity, it’s a distraction. Take care of it before or after your trip, not while behind the wheel.

DISTRACTED DRIVING PROTOCOL

Don’t Multi-Task. Drivers should only do one thing while on the road: Drive! They should never multi-task while driving. This includes not texting, video chatting, and social media posting while driving.

Don’t Eat/Drink While Driving. Eating or drinking while driving can be a big distraction. Therefore, drivers should eat before or after their trips. If necessary, they should pull off the road in a safe place to eat.

Avoid Complicated Tasks. Using technology, such as voice-activated systems or handless devices, may seem safe. However, these systems still distract a driver’s attention away from the road.

Never Use a Phone While Driving. If a driver must make a phone call, they should pull over to a safe place and make the call. Even using a hands-free phone while driving could result in an accident. Drivers can remain distracted for 27 seconds after making a call, even if they use a hands-free device, according to The American Automobile Association (AAA).

Store Gear Properly. Drivers should store loose gear in the proper compartments so that they don’t roll around the truck. Reaching for loose items could be catastrophic.

Make All Adjustments Before Hitting the Road. Drivers should set GPS, climate control, and sound systems, as well as adjust mirrors and seats, before setting out on the road.

Get Organized. Drivers should organize paperwork and properly store electronic devices before heading out.

Keep Eyes on the Road. Drivers should always keep their eyes on the road and avoid looking at things like cool-looking buildings or eye-catching billboards. It’s recommended that drivers move their eyes every two seconds and scan mirrors every five to eight seconds.

Never Drive Drowsy. Drowsy driving is a factor in more than

100,000 crashes each year, according to NHTSA. And drowsy driving can hurt driving execution as much as or more so than alcohol.

FINAL WORD

Safe driving demands your undivided attention. Keep your eyes and your mind on the road. Driving and multitasking can never safely coexist. If you need to make or take a phone call, check driving directions or select some different music, pull over into a safe place. Two minutes of inconvenience seems like a more than fair trade for a few extra years or decades of life.