

Distractions inside your Vehicle Meeting Kit

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Distractions inside your vehicle take your attention away from driving and can be broadly categorized into three types:

Visual Distractions: These distractions take your eyes off the road.

Manual Distractions: These distractions involve taking one or both hands off the steering wheel.

Cognitive Distractions: These distractions divert your mental focus away from driving.

WHAT'S THE DANGER

COMMON DISTRACTIONS THAT OCCUR INSIDE A VEHICLE

- **Using a smartphone** for texting, calling, or browsing while driving is a major distraction.
- **Adjusting the radio or interacting with touchscreen entertainment systems** can divert attention from the road.
- **Adjusting GPS** devices can require your eyes, hands, and mental focus, leading to distraction.
- **Eating and drinking** while driving takes your hands off the wheel and eyes off the road.
- **Personal grooming** tasks can take your attention away from driving.
- **Engaging in conversations with passengers** can divert cognitive focus, especially during heated discussions.
- **Unrestrained pets** can move around the vehicle and distract the driver.
- **Reaching for items** in the back seat, on the floor, or in the glove compartment take eyes off the road.

- **Reading maps** and writing notes can all be highly distracting.
- **Smoking cigarettes** can take one hand off the wheel and require visual and cognitive attention.
- Engaging in **deep thought** unrelated to driving can lead to cognitive distraction.
- **Adjusting climate controls and seats** can lead to both visual and manual distractions.
- **Focusing on external objects**, even for a moment, can take your eyes off the road.
- **Frequently checking yourself** in the rearview mirror can divert your attention from driving.
- **Using apps** unrelated to driving, such as social media or games, can lead to cognitive distraction.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

BEST PRACTICES AND TECHNIQUES TO PREVENT DISTRACTIONS WHILE DRIVING

Set Clear Intentions:

- Commit to prioritize safe driving and minimize distractions before you start your journey.

Put Your Phone Away:

- Place your phone in a location that's out of reach, such as the glove compartment or the backseat.

Use Voice Commands:

- Use voice commands to make calls, send messages, and use navigation apps to keep your hands on the wheel.

Minimize In-Car Activities:

- Avoid engaging in activities that take your hands off the steering wheel and your eyes off the road.
- Save eating, drinking, and personal grooming for times when you're not driving.

Plan Ahead:

- Set up your GPS, adjust mirrors, and configure climate controls before you start driving.
- Program destinations and routes before you begin your journey.

Use Distraction-Blocking Apps:

- Install apps that block incoming notifications and calls while you're driving.
- These apps can help you stay focused and avoid the temptation to check your phone.

Educate Passengers:

- Engage in conversations that don't divert your attention from the road.

Secure Loose Items:

- Ensure that items are securely stored so they don't become distractions during sudden movements.

Practice Mindfulness:

- Stay mentally present while driving. If your mind starts to wander, gently bring your focus back to the road.

Stay Calm Emotionally:

- Avoid engaging in emotional conversations or arguments, as they can take your focus away from driving.

Limit Infotainment Use:

- Adjust radio stations, music, or entertainment systems before or after driving to prevent distractions.

Use Passenger Assistance:

- If you have passengers, ask them to help with tasks like navigation or changing settings.

Practice Defensive Driving:

- Be alert to the behavior of other drivers and anticipate potential hazards.

Take Breaks on Long Trips:

- During long drives, schedule breaks to rest, stretch, and refresh yourself.

Reflect After Each Drive:

- After reaching your destination, reflect on how well you managed distractions during the trip.

Lead by Example:

- To be a role model for others, demonstrate distraction-free driving to promote responsible habits.

Stay Informed:

- Continuously educate yourself about the risks of distractions while driving and ways to prevent them.

FINAL WORD

Preventing distractions inside your vehicle is a responsibility that ensures not only your safety but also the safety and well-being of all road users. It reflects a commitment to being a responsible and conscientious driver.