# Understanding Driving Distractions Meeting Kit

## WHAT’S AT STAKE

Understanding driving distractions” refers to comprehending the various factors and activities that can divert a driver’s attention from the task of driving safely. This understanding involves recognizing the different types of distractions (visual, manual, and cognitive) and being aware of the potential sources of distractions that can arise while driving.

## WHAT’S THE DANGER

**COMMON SOURCES OF DRIVING DISTRACTIONS**

- **Mobile Devices:** Texting, calling, or using apps while driving is a significant cause of accidents.
- **Passengers:** Engaging in conversations or dealing with rowdy passengers can divert attention from the road.
- **Eating and Drinking:** Trying to eat or drink while driving takes focus away from the road and vehicle control.
- **Grooming:** Applying makeup, combing hair, or other personal grooming tasks are dangerous while driving.
- **Navigation Systems:** Trying to input or adjust navigation directions while driving can cause visual, manual, and cognitive distractions.
- **External Factors:** Events like focusing on an accident on the side of the road can be distracting.
- **Daydreaming:** A wandering mind can lead to a lack of attention on driving.
- **Music and Entertainment:** Changing radio stations or fiddling with entertainment systems can divert attention.

# HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

**STRATEGIES TO RECOGNIZE, MANAGE AND MINIMIZE DISTRACTIONS**

**Awareness and Education:**

- Stay informed about local laws and regulations related to distracted driving.

**Mindful Driving:**

- Focus your attention on the road, your surroundings, and the task of driving.

**Set a Safe Environment:**

- Ensure your vehicle’s mirrors, seat, and entertainment systems are set up before you start driving.
- Secure any loose items that could become distractions during sudden movements.

**Use Technology Responsibly:**

- Utilize hands-free technology for phone calls and navigation.
- Activate “Do Not Disturb” mode or driving mode features on your phone.

**Minimize Multitasking:**

- Refrain from engaging in activities like eating, drinking, or grooming while driving.
- Avoid trying to read or send messages while on the road.

**Limit Passenger Distractions:**

- Communicate to passengers the importance of maintaining a distraction-free environment.
- If necessary, ask passengers to assist with tasks like navigation.

**Take Breaks:**

- During long drives, schedule regular breaks to rest, stretch, and refresh yourself.
- Fatigue can lead to increased susceptibility to distractions.

**Practice Defensive Driving:**

- Stay alert to the actions of other drivers and anticipate potential hazards.
- Defensive driving can help you react more effectively to unexpected situations.

**Use Apps and Tools:**

- Utilize smartphone apps that block or minimize notifications while driving.
- Use dashboard or windshield-mounted phone holders for easier navigation access.

**Lead by Example:**

- Model distraction-free driving behaviors for passengers and others on the road.
- Show that you prioritize safety and responsible driving.

**Establish Clear Boundaries:**

- Make it a personal rule to avoid any distracting activities while driving.
- Set clear boundaries for yourself and communicate them to others.

**Stay Emotionally Calm:**

- Avoid engaging in emotionally charged conversations or arguments while driving.
- Emotional distractions can impair your focus and decision-making.

**Plan Ahead:**

- Plan your routes and destinations before you start driving to reduce the need for navigation adjustments.

**Stay Rested and Alert:**

- Avoid driving if you’re fatigued or drowsy, as this can increase susceptibility to distractions.

**Remind Yourself of the Risks:**

- Remind yourself of the potential consequences and risks of distracting behavior.

**Practice Patience:**

- Accept that traffic delays and other inconveniences are a part of driving. Remain patient and focused.

**Reflect and Learn:**

- After each drive, reflect on how well you managed distractions and what you could improve.
- Continuously learn from your experiences to become a safer and more attentive driver.

# FINAL WORD

Understanding driving distractions is essential for promoting road safety, preventing accidents, and fostering a culture of responsible driving behavior. It empowers individuals to make informed decisions that protect their own lives and the lives of others who share the road.