



5 Minute Safety Talk



Proud Member

Distracted Driving:

Having the Difficult Conversations

The use of electronic devices behind the wheel is all too common these days. In fact, many of these devices are being built into our vehicles, making them very tempting to use. However, they are also extremely dangerous – even if you’re using them hands-free. While you may understand the danger these devices pose and avoid using them yourself while driving, you’ve probably been in a vehicle with another person who has driven distracted. Did you say anything?

We’ve all been in one of the following scenarios where we weren’t sure what to say in order to preserve our safety and the safety of those around us. It’s your right to get to where you’re going safely. Let’s explore some ways you can ensure that happens.

Scenario #1:

We’ve all probably been in a taxi or rideshare service where the driver spent the entire ride on the phone. It might feel awkward to say something to a stranger, but remember that you are the customer and deserve to be safe. It can be as simple as saying when you first notice the driver being distracted, “For your safety and for mine, can you please not use your mobile devices while I’m in the car?” You can even let them know that if they do not disconnect, you’d like them to pull over and let you out.

As people who drive for a living, they’ve surely seen their fair share of distracted drivers and have probably encountered some close calls. Arm yourself with some quick stats to help explain why it’s so dangerous. If you still feel awkward and travel frequently for work, consider printing up a small business card that you can hand the driver when you get in with your request. Remind yourself of the saying, “The customer is always right,” and in this case you definitely are.

Scenario #2

Perhaps you’ve been in the car with your co-workers, either driving on a business trip or just heading out to

the local sandwich shop for lunch, and they've made a call or sent a text behind the wheel. Again, it's good to share that you care about both their safety and yours. You could say, "I'd appreciate it if you'd not use your phone while driving – it's the safest choice for both of us." Or, "Do you mind waiting until we are parked to make that call or send that text?" Also, a little education can go a long way, so share a few quick stats with them as well.

If they are taking a business-related call, offer to do the talking as the passenger so the driver can focus on the road. You might be a little embarrassed to speak up, especially if there are other co-workers in the vehicle too, but in a recent NSC poll 74% of respondents said they view distracted drivers as a major traffic safety concern. Odds are, others in the vehicle are just as concerned as you and they'll actually really appreciate you speaking up.

Scenario #3

Unfortunately, many people seem to view their drive as a time to catch up with people during a busy day. So speak up for safety even when you are not in the vehicle. Let's say you receive a phone call from your spouse, family member or friend, and you know they are driving when talking to you. You can say, "Are you driving right now? Let's catch up once you're parked. I don't want you to be distracted while you're driving."

Also, teach your children the dangers of distracted driving and tell them to speak up if they see someone doing it. They are usually much less bashful to point it out and will help keep drivers accountable even when you aren't with them.

Knowledge is power

Here are a few quick statistics you can keep in your arsenal to make these conversations easier. The data doesn't lie, so it is great to have in your back pocket.

- Thousands of people needlessly die each year in distracted driving crashes.
- Up to 94 percent of crashes are caused by human error – shouldn't we be operating at our best?
- When you are talking and driving – even hands-free – your brain can miss seeing up to 50 percent of your driving environment.
- Multitasking is a myth. Driving and phone conversations both require a great deal of thought. When doing them at the same time, your brain is unable to do either well.
- New studies show using voice-to-text is actually more distracting than typing texts by hand – you should never do either behind the wheel.



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