

5

minute safety talk



Minimize driver distractions

Distractions can range from new types of in-car technology and more congested roadways to a group of teenage passengers or a crying baby. Inattention to driving occurs when a driver is engaged in secondary tasks, including eating or talking on a cell phone, or glancing away from the road for longer than two seconds.

People engaged in cell phone conversations while driving experience cognitive distraction, which poses a much higher risk than a conversation with a passenger. A cognitive distraction is any distraction that takes a driver's mind (as opposed to eyes) off the road. Drivers should acknowledge their social responsibility and put down the phone. In emergencies, drivers should pull over to a safe location to make a call.

Bringing safety home (tips for safety professionals):

- Encourage employees to follow company cell phone and driving policies whenever they drive – not only at work.

Employee activity ideas:

- If you do not already have one, implement an employee cell phone and driving policy.
- Offer a defensive driving program to all employees and encourage them drive defensively at all times.

Safety tips:

- Do not talk on a cell phone or text message while driving.
- Avoid activities that distract from driving or remove your focus from the road for longer than two seconds, including eating, drinking, smoking, picking up a moving object, reading, writing, reaching into the glove compartment, cleaning the inside of the windshield, arguing with another passenger, combing hair, shaving, putting on makeup, grooming nails, putting in contacts, and breaking up fights between children.
- Always wear a safety belt and drive defensively.

Community linkages:

- Know local and state laws about using cell phones and text messaging while driving.
- Support cell phone enforcement and legislation.

Resources:

- National Safety Council http://www.nsc.org/safety_road/Distracted_Driving/Pages/distracted_driving.aspx
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/portal/site/nhtsa/menuitem.54757ba83ef160af9a7ccf10dba046a0/>