

Safety Matters

Provided by: SCS Agency Inc

Distracted Driving Prevention Tips

If your job requires you to operate a company vehicle—whether it’s a car, passenger van, large truck or bus—it’s crucial to stay focused behind the wheel and prioritize safe driving practices, namely by avoiding distracted driving. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines distracted driving as engaging in any activity that takes your attention off the road.

Distracted driving is extremely dangerous and can lead to serious consequences. In fact, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reported that distracted driving contributes to nearly 400,000 injuries and 3,000 fatalities each year. With this in mind, it’s imperative for you to remain attentive and minimize potential distractions while driving. This article outlines some of the most common causes of distracted driving and offers related prevention tips.

Causes of Distracted Driving

Distractions behind the wheel can be visual, physical, cognitive or auditory in nature. Here’s a breakdown of these distractions:

- **Visual distractions**—Such distractions involve taking your eyes off the road. Some examples of visual distractions include reading emails or text messages, looking at maps or navigation systems and observing nearby activities (e.g., accidents, traffic stops or roadside attractions) while driving.
- **Manual distractions**—These distractions cause you to remove your hands from the steering wheel. Key examples of manual distractions include texting, adjusting the radio, programming navigation systems, eating, drinking or performing personal grooming tasks (e.g., applying makeup) while driving.
- **Cognitive distractions**—Such distractions stem from thinking about something other than driving. Primary examples of cognitive distractions include focusing on vehicle passengers or daydreaming while driving.
- **Auditory distractions**—These distractions are audible elements that divert your attention from the road. Some examples of auditory distractions include listening to loud music or talking on the phone while driving.

Prevention Tips

Whenever you get behind the wheel, keep the following distracted driving prevention measures in mind:

- **Put away your phone.** Silence your phone and store it in a safe location that is out of reach to avoid checking it while driving.
- **Plan your trip before you leave.** Program your navigation system before hitting the road to get familiar with your journey and feel confident in your route.
- **Play music responsibly.** Select a radio station or plug in a predetermined playlist before



driving to limit the need for music adjustments. Always play music at a reasonable volume.

- **Utilize in-vehicle technology.** Be sure to leverage any technology within your company vehicle that promotes safe driving, including hands-free communication devices, voice-activated controls and telematics solutions.
- **Avoid multitasking.** Never complete additional tasks, such as eating or personal grooming, behind the wheel.
- **Stay focused.** Concentrate your mind on the road by keeping distracting conversations to a minimum and looking straight ahead.
- **Maintain compliance.** Make sure you comply with all workplace policies and applicable local, state and federal legislation regarding distracted driving.

Conclusion

Distracted driving is a major concern that can pose significant safety hazards on the road. Fortunately, having a better understanding of distracted driving and taking steps to limit any distractions behind the wheel can make all the difference in preventing accidents.

Reach out to your supervisor for additional safe driving guidance.