

## Drivers Do Not Take Distracted Driving Serious Enough!



Know the numbers. More than 3,100 people in the U.S. died in distraction-related crashes in 2019 alone – that’s at least 8 people every day. That same year, 287,000 people were injured in distraction-related crashes.

Drivers should be aware of three major types of distraction: visual (eyes), manual (hands) and cognitive (mind). Most people recognize when they are visually and/or manually distracted and seek to disengage from those activities as quickly as possible. People typically do not realize when they are cognitively distracted, such as when using a cell phone. When your eyes, hands and mind are not focused on driving, **(continued page 2)**

## Inattention Blindness



Inattention blindness is defined as the failure to notice a visible hazard because your attention is focused elsewhere. This phenomenon occurs regularly when drivers are cognitively distracted.

Example: Let’s say a driver is using voice commands to order takeout food. The driver’s brain becomes lost on that order (thin or thick crust pizza?). Instead of focusing on what’s ahead, the driver could miss up to half of what it is in his or her driving environment, including slow or stopped vehicles up ahead. This behavior can have deadly consequences.

Research shows just listening to a cell phone conversation decreases brain activity associated with driving by more than one-third, leading to safety performance issues, such as the inability to react quickly in congested driving zones. Think of it as driving blindfolded.

### SUM IT UP

The human brain cannot handle two thinking tasks at the same time, such as driving and talking on the phone. Your brain toggles quickly between these two tasks. When driving, this can slow reaction time and cause crashes. Be safe by silencing your phone, programming your GPS and setting up your radio or music while you still are parked.

Texting is even worse than phone calls because your eyes are taken away from the driving task. People think they can focus on both, but their eyes are looking at the text longer than looking straight ahead at the road. Don’t forget that drivers tend to steer in the direction they are looking. Texting also causes a driver to drive slower than the posted speed limit. Don’t text and drive.

Your life is much more valuable than any phone call, text or playlist. Let’s get on board with traffic safety.

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**(continued from page 1)** you increase the chance that you will make mistakes that can result in injuries or even death.

Show your concern for safety. Employers can demonstrate to employees that they take safety seriously by having a safe driving policy that addresses distracted driving.

### **Hands-Free is not Risk-Free.**

Hands-free devices and voice command systems create a cognitive distraction as the driver mentally engages with interactive tasks. While hands-free options may be marginally safer than handheld devices, eliminating driver use of all types of cell phones and in-vehicle infotainment systems is safest.

### **Drivers Think Cell Phone Use is Distracting for Other People.**

Although 87% of people think talking on a cell phone while driving is a serious safety threat, 49% have talked on a handheld phone while driving. Drivers should talk the talk AND walk the walk, refraining from using their phone when behind the wheel.

### **It is Impossible to Multitask and Give Equal Attention to Each Task.**

People often think they are effectively accomplishing two tasks at the same time. It is possible to complete a phone conversation while driving and arrive at the destination without incident, but it is a misconception that the tasks can be done simultaneously and as safe as possible. Motorists should make driving the primary focus and perform other cognitively demanding tasks only when safely parked.

## **Parking Lot Injuries are Often the Result of Distraction!**



Parking lots are riskier than you think. Tens of thousands of crashes occur in parking lots and garage structures annually, resulting in hundreds of deaths and thousands of injuries. And, around holidays, parking lots become even more dangerous.

In a National Safety Council (NSC) public opinion poll, 66% of drivers nationwide said they would make phone calls while driving through parking lots. Respondents also said they would:

- Program GPS systems (63%)
- Text (56%)
- Use social media (52%)
- Send or receive emails (50%)
- Take photos or watch videos (49%)

NSC found teens (59%) were more likely to engage in personal grooming than adults (53%) while driving in parking lots, but less likely to be on the phone (60% vs 66%).

During the holiday season, drivers and pedestrians also are likely to be distracted by extensive to-do lists and are hurriedly trying to get from one place to another.

Safety isn't guaranteed just by driving slowly in parking lots. Following are some safety tips for drivers:

- Stay in lanes and avoid cutting across lots.
- Drive slowly and use directional signals.
- Anticipate the actions of other drivers.
- Obey stop signs and no parking signs.
- When backing out, be mindful of vehicles and pedestrians.
- Watch for small children and parents with baby strollers.

Stay focused and avoid distractions. Keep safety first!

## **Reminder!!!!**

April is distracted driving month.

## **Did You Know?**

Distracted driving isn't just about using cell phones? Other distractions include, navigation systems, fumbling with the radio, passengers, children, pets, eating/drinking or applying makeup while driving, etc. Anything that can take the driver's attention from focusing on driving.

## **Safety Tip of the Month**

Help prevent falls by never using chairs, especially swivel chairs, as a step stool. The right way is the safe way. Keep safety first.

## **Notes From the Editor**

Send articles or opinions to:

Bill Devinney, Owner/Safety Consultant  
Safetydude, LLC  
4836 Hardware Dr. NE Suite A  
Albuquerque, NM 87109  
Phone: 505-259-8556

Or e-mail me at [devinneywilliamr@msn.com](mailto:devinneywilliamr@msn.com)