

When behind the wheel, drivers should always be fully aware of their surroundings, remain focused solely on driving and avoid all types of distractions.

A distraction is anything that directs your attention away from something else. Distracted driving occurs when a driver is attempting to do one or more other tasks in addition to driving and their attention becomes divided.



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Distracted Driving can occur when you take your **mind** off driving, take your **hands** off the wheel, or take your **eyes** off the road. Personal grooming, eating, trying to find the perfect radio station or reading a text message are all common driving distractions that should be avoided.

Distracted driving claims the lives of thousands of people each year. To ensure workers arrive safely to each location that they are driving to, review this safety topic for tips to remain distraction-free while driving.

Multitasking is a myth, and leads to a dangerous condition called Inattention Blindness.

Inattention Blindness occurs when a driver fails to notice a visible hazard because their attention is focused on something else. When multitasking, the driver's brain is switching back and forth between driving and the distraction, which can lead to slow reaction time and can cause a collision.

Avoid any of these distractions while driving:

- making or taking calls
- reading or sending text messages or emails
- browsing the internet
- scanning social media
- programming your GPS or maps app
- closing out jobs/work
- taking photos
- looking at any app on your phone
- eating
- daydreaming or 'zoning out'
- opening food or drinks
- smoking
- reaching into the back seat for an item
- personal grooming or looking in the mirror at yourself
- bending down to pick up something that fell on the floor of the vehicle



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NEVER drive and use your phone at the same time.

Drivers on cell phones, even using the hands-free features, see just a fraction of their driving environment because their attention is being divided between the road and the conversation.

Hands-Free is not Risk-Free. Drivers looking out the windshield can miss seeing up to 50% of what's around them when using the hands-free functionality with their cell phone.

Use your cell phone only when you are safely parked.



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Don't look at your phone at red stop lights either!

- You may be compelled to keep looking at your screen after the light has turned green.
- The distraction may cause you to miss an abrupt stop in front of you after the light turns green and cause a rear-end collision.
- As you continue driving after putting your phone down you may become further distracted by something you saw or read that takes your mind off the road.

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- Emergency, fire, police personnel and their vehicles can cause a distraction while driving. Pull over into another lane, further away, if possible, when coming up on emergency vehicles that are pulled onto the shoulder or side of a street/highway.
- Accident scenes create distraction. Avoid staring at an accident scene when passing by on the roadway. Use caution when passing the accident scene but do not look back or beside you for too long as this takes your eyes off the road in front of you and could cause another accident!
- When driving through a construction work zone, slow down and pay attention. There may be a flagger directing traffic and/or construction workers near the flow of traffic.
- While on worksites, many things including equipment, materials, and other employees may be present. Ensure both hands are always on your steering wheel and you remain distraction-free while driving. **ALWAYS** stay fully aware of your surroundings.



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Here's how to prepare for a distraction-free drive:

- Complete your phone calls, texts and emails.
- Finish your snack or your meal, and if you have a drink, make sure it has a secure lid on it.
- Program your GPS, start your playlist, queue up your audiobook or set up any other electronics that need to play while you are driving so that you don't need to touch anything after you start driving.
- Enable the Do Not Disturb feature so you won't be distracted by notifications.
- Put the phone in a glove box, purse, bag or other space that is out of reach.
- Before longer drives, inform your co-workers, family, and friends that you will be driving and that you will not be checking your phone or accepting calls while you drive, then allow time to safely park and check your messages, if needed.
- Avoid driving if you are upset, fatigued or sick.

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