



DISTRACTED DRIVING

JAN 2021

LENGTH 2–5 minutes

TO PREPARE Read the background information and watch the video on cell phone policies: <https://tinyurl.com/y7rob9zr>

Bring the company’s policy on cell phone usage while driving.

BACKGROUND

- Data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) shows that in 2016, 3,450 people were killed, accounting for nine percent of all fatal crashes in the US.
- NHTSA estimated that in 2016, during daylight hours, approximately 481,000 drivers were using cell phones while driving. That creates enormous potential for deaths and injuries on U.S. roads.
- “National Safety Council has reviewed more than 30 studies that show that hands-free devices don’t make driving any safer, because the brain remains distracted by the conversation,” reports NSC CEO Debbie Hersman in a recent video on the topic (link referenced in “To Prepare”).

DISCUSSION

- We are busy. In fact, we may be so busy at work, that we are doing more than one thing at once, right? And sometimes that’s great. But it’s never great while driving.
- When you are driving, is your attention ever focused on something other than the task of driving? Let’s talk about ways to avoid being distracted while driving.



What are ways you have noticed drivers being distracted?

- Answers may include cell phones, infotainment screens, make-up, reading, eating.
- Watch the Live with Lisa video and see if you missed anything she listed: <https://txdrivingconcern.org/distracted-driving-your-employees-can-protect-themselves-others/>



TRAFFIC SAFETY Huddle



There are three types of distractions. Do you know what they are?

- **Visual:** Distracting your eyes from the path in front of you.
- **Manual:** Distracting your hands from the steering wheel.
- **Cognitive:** Distracting your brain from the complex task of driving.



When you are using a hands-free device with your cell phone, which of these types of distractions applies?

- **Visual and Cognitive.** Hands-free takes away the need for mechanical distraction, but there is no evidence that hands-free cell phone use while driving is safer. The driver is still distracted.



When you are talking to the passenger in your vehicle, which of these distractions applies?

- **Cognitive:** For the most part, cognitive distraction is the main type of distraction in this situation. You are thinking about the conversation—both what you are listening to, and what you are saying.

OPTIONAL DISCUSSION

Employer Cell Phone Policy

The National Safety Council makes strong recommendations why every workplace needs a cell phone policy. Review the video for reasons why.

- <https://tinyurl.com/y7rob9zr>

SUMMARY

- Being busy is a way of life, but it is important for drivers to be able to set aside all other tasks while they are driving.
- There is no current evidence showing that hands-free devices are safer than hand-held cell phones. The safest practice is to stay off your cell phone while driving.
- When thinking about distractions, keep in mind the three ways that a driver can be distracted and how those three ways influence the driver's ability to focus on the drive.