Distraction and Parking Lots

LENGTH 2–5 minutes

TO PREPARE Read the background information.

BACKGROUND
- According to The National Safety Council, as many as 66% of drivers may be pulling into and exiting out of parking spaces while distracted.
- 1 in every 5 crashes occurs in a parking lot or parking garage.
- The NSC found that at least 60,000 people are injured and approximately 500 people die every year in more than 50,000 parking lot crashes.
- Smartphones may be the reason for this alarming trend.
  - Texting or talking on the phone is a leading reason for distracted driving in general.
  - The ease one feels in a parking lot may be the reason more drivers are willing to operate their vehicles while distracted.
  - Researchers say slower speeds in parking lots give people a false sense of security. Even though drivers tend to maintain slower speeds in parking lots and garages, the consequences of driving distracted can be devastating.

DISCUSSION
- Distraction and parking lots can be a deadly combination.
- An NSC poll found that as many as two-thirds of drivers may be pulling into shopping centers distracted.
- 1 in 5 incidents happen in parking lots.
- Pedestrians and children unintentionally left in vehicles are at risk.

What do you think is the leading culprit for distraction?
- Mobile phones cause the most distraction for drivers, whether they are talking, texting, checking social media or browsing on a website. The risk of distraction is deadly.
Common Parking Lot Scenarios

- A person exiting their vehicle becomes a pedestrian.
  - Workers may feel safe walking to the workplace from the parking lot. However, there may be many other vehicles moving about the parking lot. Distraction—such as walking to the building while checking text messages—can cause a worker to miss seeing these other vehicles.

- Drivers whose routine is changed and who may have their mind on the next thing in their day, may inadvertently leave a young child in the vehicle. Distracted pedestrians may also miss seeing children unattended in another vehicle in the lot.
  - 24% of child heatstroke deaths in vehicles occurred at a workplace.

How quickly can a vehicle interior heat up, even on a cloudy day?

- On average, the temperature inside a vehicle increases 19 degrees in 10 minutes.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELAPSED TIME</th>
<th>OUTSIDE Air Temperature</th>
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<td>60 minutes</td>
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Summary

- Even though people tend to drive a lot slower in a parking lot, the consequences of distraction can be deadly.
- People have their heads down; they are on their phones whether they are behind the wheel or walking through the lot.