



## Distraction and Parking Lots

APR 2021

**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.



# TRAFFIC SAFETY Huddle



## 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.

ELAPSED TIME	OUTSIDE Air Temperature					
	70	75	80	85	90	95
0 minutes	70	75	80	85	90	95
10 minutes	89	94	99	104	109	114
20 minutes	99	104	109	114	119	124
30 minutes	104	109	114	119	124	129
40 minutes	108	113	118	123	128	133
50 minutes	111	116	121	126	131	136
60 minutes	113	118	123	128	133	138

Courtesy Jan Null, CCM; Department of Meteorology & Climate Science, San Jose State University

## 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.