



DISTRACTIONS



When you are driving a vehicle and you get distracted, your attention is not going to be on the road. As a result you're going to put yourself and other vehicles and pedestrians in danger. Distracted driving is the result of performing any activity that shifts your full attention from driving.

Taking your eyes off the road even for a few seconds or to take your hands off the steering wheel presents obvious risks. Keep in mind that there are mental activities that take your mind away from driving and it also becomes dangerous. When distracted you might glance at the road but fail to see any dangers because your attention is focused somewhere else.

Activities that are distractions are:

- Talking on your cell phone or CB radio
- Changing the radio station, CD player or climate controls
- Eating, drinking or smoking
- Reading maps or other literature like rest area or truck stop locations list
- Picking up something that fell
- Reading billboards and other road advertisements
- Watching other people and vehicles including aggressive drivers
- Using navigation systems
- Daydreaming or other mental distractions.

If you react a half-second slower because of a distraction, your crash rate doubles. Here are some tips to follow so you won't become distracted:

- Pre-program radio stations or favorite CDs or cassette tapes.
- Review maps and plan your route before you start driving.
- Don't attempt to read or write while you drive.
- Avoid smoking, eating and drinking while you drive.
- Don't engage in complex or emotionally intense conversations. When possible, pull off the road in a safe, legal place when making/receiving a call on communication equipment.
- Position the cell phone within easy reach and always use your hands free to answer but keep in mind even these devices are unsafe to use when you are moving down the road.
- Pre-program cell phones with commonly called numbers.
- If you have to place a call, find a safe place to pull off the road. Do not place a call while driving. Never use the cell phone for social visiting.
- Hang up in tricky traffic or when approaching road construction, heavy pedestrian traffic, or severe weather conditions.
- Do not attempt to type or read messages on your satellite system while driving.