



Safety *talk*

Distracted Driving

In 2016, **distracted driving** was the main cause of fatal collisions on Ontario roads. Sixty-five people lost their lives due to inattentive drivers, compared with 55 speed-related deaths, 53 seatbelt-related deaths, and 45 alcohol-related deaths.*

Explain dangers

When you're not focused on the road, bad things can happen fast. Using your phone to talk or text, operating a GPS, and eating or reading while you're behind the wheel are distractions. These actions put you and others at risk.

In fact, your risk of being in a motor vehicle collision increases considerably depending on what you're doing.

- Texting – 23 times more likely
- Reaching for something – 9 times more likely
- Talking on the phone – 5 times more likely
- Reading – 3 times more likely
- Dialing a handheld device – 3 times more likely
- Using a hands-free device – 1.3 times more likely.

Anything that takes your full attention away from driving is a distraction.

- **Visual or audible distractions** are things you see or hear that cause you to take your eyes or attention off the road.
- **Physical distractions** are things that cause you to take your hands off the wheel or your feet off the pedals.
- **Psychological distractions** are things you're feeling or thinking about that take your mind off the task of driving.

Because our attention span has decreased in recent years, many of us need constant stimulation. This can cause conditions such as the following:

Sensory overload – This happens when you cannot process all the information coming from your senses. As the signals from your senses increase, your ability to process them decreases.

Inattentive blindness – This happens when you cannot see something that is right in front of you because your attention is somewhere else.

*According to statistics released by the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) in 2017

Identify controls

You may never be able to remove all the distractions while driving. The most important thing is to keep your attention on the task of driving.

Before driving

- **Set up your car** – Make sure you're comfortable and prepared for the drive ahead. Take the time to adjust the temperature, seats, mirrors, etc. That way, you'll be less likely to do it while driving. Also turn off your phone so you're not distracted by the ringer.
- **Keep it clean** – Loose objects moving around in your car while you're driving can be a distraction.
- **Map it out** – Plan your route and set up your GPS before you leave. That way, you won't need to operate it on the way.
- **Manage your time** – Give yourself enough time to get where you need to go. Worrying about being late can distract you. You'll also be less likely to multi-task by eating or reading on the way.

While driving

- DO NOT use any handheld devices.
- Avoid multi-tasking. Focus on the driving task.
- Drive only when you're well rested.
- Keep noise to a minimum.
- Follow the rules of the road.
- Have a positive attitude. (e.g., show concern for others and don't lose your temper.)
- Look ahead (i.e., use your **lead vision**).

Lead vision is the practice of looking far enough ahead of your vehicle so you can see anything that may cause a problem and deal with it in time. It can help you brake sooner or come up with a plan to prevent a collision. These few extra seconds can make a big difference if you need to stop.

This is how far a vehicle travels in four seconds.

- At 50 km/h – 56 metres (half a football field)
- At 100 km/h – 111 metres (more than a football field).

Demonstrate

Discuss any regulations or company rules that relate to distracted driving. If your company has a cell phone policy, review it with your crew. Explain how they should handle phone calls while driving.