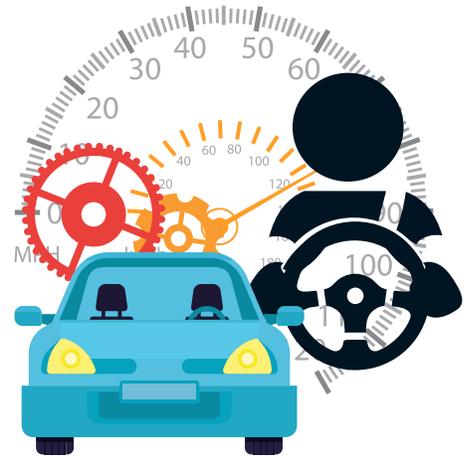


Distractions and Solutions for Drivers



When you are behind the wheel, driving is your only job. Here is a list of distractions that all drivers need to manage, and steps you can take to manage them.

Talking on a mobile phone

- On the road, the smartest phone is off.
- Place your phone securely in its cradle, or the glove box.
- Set it so that any incoming calls go directly to voice mail.
- Record a phone message telling callers that you are busy driving and can't take a call. Ask them to leave a message and that you will call them back once you can safely pull over.
- Although hands-free devices are permitted under law, know that "hands-free" does not mean "distraction free." Hands-free devices are no safer than handheld devices.



Using a navigation system

- It's not the device that is safe or dangerous; it's how you decide to use it. If you program the navigation system while driving, you are breaking the law and engaging in a potentially costly distraction.
- Program your route before you set out for the trip.
 - Ensure the device is securely mounted and is in a readily visible location but does not obstruct or reduce your view of the area around your vehicle, including rear view mirrors.
 - If the device needs to be re-programmed during the trip, pull over where it safe to do so.



Texting

- Before you get underway, turn your smartphone off.
- If texting while driving is too much of a temptation, put your device in the trunk.
- If you know you will have to send or respond to a text during the journey, schedule time during the trip to pull over, do your texting, put the device away and return to driving.



Adjusting the radio, infotainment system or searching for music on your smartphone

- Only use simple controls, like station presets or volume controls when driving.
- Avoid using speech recognition features often found in newer vehicles.
- According to Ontario laws, a person may not have a video image displayed within view of the driver.
- Pre-program your playlist before getting underway. If you need to select a new playlist, find a safe place and pull over.



Eating and drinking

- Eat your breakfast or have a snack before you set out for the drive.
- If that doesn't hold you until your destination, plan to stop for a snack break every two hours.
- If you need a sip of water or coffee, some situations and locations are better than others. For example, intersections, school zones, construction zones and merge lanes are not good choices.



Talking to passengers

- A casual conversation can have its place in locations and at times when driving risks are low. A heated debate with a passenger occupies too much of your driving attention.
- Your passengers are counting on you to keep them safe. Involve them in the journey – get them to watch the traffic, and pause the conversation at critical driving moments.
- If you have a passenger, have them conduct any necessary phone calls. Rely on them to be your navigator and provide timely directions. Let them control music selection.



Reading, including using maps or printed directions

- Reading a map, directions, book or newspaper takes as much visual, cognitive and manual concentration as texting. If you need to read, safely pull over and park the vehicle.
- Figure out where you are headed before setting out. Take note of key streets and intersections. Rehearse the directions. If you lose track, pull over and check.



Pets

- Safely secure pets when driving in a cage or with a harness.
- If you are driving for work, regulations require that animals must not be carried in the operator's cab or passenger compartment of a vehicle transporting workers unless appropriate facilities are provided for this purpose.



Daydreaming and personal grooming

- If the transmission is in "drive" so is the requirement to pay attention.
- Remember to use the time spent at stop lights to scan the road environment.
- Daydreaming can also be a sign you are fatigued and losing your ability to focus. If that's the case, safely pull over and take a break to get some fresh air. If necessary, take a brief nap or rest before resuming your trip.
- If you need to look your best, take care of your grooming needs before you get in the vehicle.



For more on safe driving and transportation, visit:
www.ihsa.ca/roadsafetyatwork