

# Safety Talk

## Distracted Driving

16% of all traffic fatalities in 2009 were distraction related. This has become such an important issue that the US Department of Transportation Safety has "declared war" on driver distractions. A large part of the focus will be on weaning drivers off whatever is distraction them.

What is meant by distracted driving and what is causing these distractions? Distracted driving is defines as any non-driving activity a person engages in that has the potential to distract him or her from the task of driving. All driving distractions can be put into one of these types:

1. Visual-taking your eyes off the road
2. Manual- taking your hands off the wheel
3. Cognitive- taking your mind off the task of driving

Examples of driving distractions include cell phone use, eating and drinking, talking to passengers, grooming (combing hair, shaving, applying makeup), reading, using a map or GPS and changing the radio station, CD or Mp3 player. All of these are dangerous but by far the most dangerous is texting. This is because it involves all three types of distractions.

It's no surprise to anyone that driving with a Blood Alcohol Content of 0.08, the legal limit in most states for drunk driving, is very dangerous and the cause of many accidents. What probably is a surprise is that distracted driving, in particular texting, causes greater impairment to driving than driving with a BAC of 0.08. The shocking piece of information in all this is that the vast majority of the driving public doesn't believe their focus or driving ability is negatively affected by these distractions.

Everyone is guilty of this behavior to some extent. We've all had a cup of coffee for the road, had to yell at the kids for messing around in the back seat or driven home after a

heated discussion with a coworker or boss. However, it seem younger drivers are more at risk for distracted driving than other groups on the road. This is probably because they're more likely to use a cell phone, text or mess around with their Mp3 players.

Whoever's at fault, the fact remains that distracted driving is a dangerous issue for the person behind the wheel as well as any one else on the road with them.

The best way to arrive safely at your destination is to minimize or remove as many distractions as possible.

### **Discussion Questions**

Why are younger drivers more at risk for distracted driving?

What are some common distractions, other than electronic devices?

# MEETING / TRAINING ATTENDANCE ROSTER

COMPANY: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ SAFETY MEETING

JOB/DEPT: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ SAFETY TRAINING

DATE: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

TOPICS ADDRESSED: \_\_\_\_\_

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## EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURES

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EMPLOYEE SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: \_\_\_\_\_

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ACTION TAKEN: \_\_\_\_\_

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Supervisor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Safety Coordinator's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Date