



Driving for Work – Distracted Driving Guidance

For Managers and Drivers

Introduction

Driver distraction is anything that takes attention away from the primary task of driving. Talking to passengers, using a handheld mobile phone (even a hands free system), manipulating a screen including satellite navigation and using infotainment systems can affect concentration levels. There are many more forms of distraction that can endanger yourself, your passengers and other road users if you choose to let them.

The Issues

Distracted driving may not appear to be as dangerous as drink driving or falling asleep at the wheel but, the severity of a crash can be just as bad. This is because distracted drivers do not have time to take evasive action such as braking or swerving and this results in severe damage to people, property and liability. **It's like being asleep at the wheel.**

Different types of driver distraction

Distraction is, anything that removes attention or interferes with the performance of the primary task.

Biomechanical – physical task such as reaching for something out of the driving position.

Auditory Distraction – sounds that distract drivers from making the best use of their hearing because their attention has been drawn to what caused the sound - loud music or listening to music using headphones.

Manual – manipulating a screen with hands off steering wheel.

Visual – looking away from the road at a small screen, keyboard, infotainment system.

Cognitive – making you think about something other than driving which can prevent you from processing the right information such as road signs and vehicle, cyclist and pedestrian movements. Otherwise referred to as 'driving on autopilot'.

According to [Gov research](#) official accident data, in 2017, there were 4,573 injury where driver distraction was recorded as a contributory factor - 774 were serious, and 125 were fatal.

Throughout the lockdown periods of 2020/21 for many of us, our natural technological habits changed.

- We are getting better with and more accustom to communicating digitally which is increasing our comfort levels of online interaction.
- We have become much more remote with our communications.
- People working from home have become reliant on digital interaction.



As traffic patterns return to normal after the lockdown restrictions, there is a danger that digital distraction related collisions will increase. Even engaging in a conversation using a hands-free device reduces eye movements and vision scanning ahead and to the sides, which narrows the field of vision and negatively affects situational awareness. In turn, this negatively affects our reaction time - however, it's not just digital distraction that creates road risk.

Listed below are some additional forms of distraction that can impact driver concentration.



Next Steps:

- Develop and communicate a distracted driving policy.
- Test all staff understanding of the policy.
- 'No mobile when mobile' – managers/supervisors should not call staff while they are driving.
- Participating in or even just listening to Zoom/ MS TEAMS meetings should be strictly prohibited while driving.
- Address passenger distraction within the distracted driving policy.
- Coach all staff regularly on the dangers of distracted driving.
- Managers/supervisors must lead by example.
- Consider installing distraction based and/or driver facing cameras for those most at risk.

For clarification or further information please contact:

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