

The Distracted Driver

-- A risk on the road



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Driving while distracted is dangerous.

It's a leading cause of motor vehicle crashes.

Many things can distract drivers.

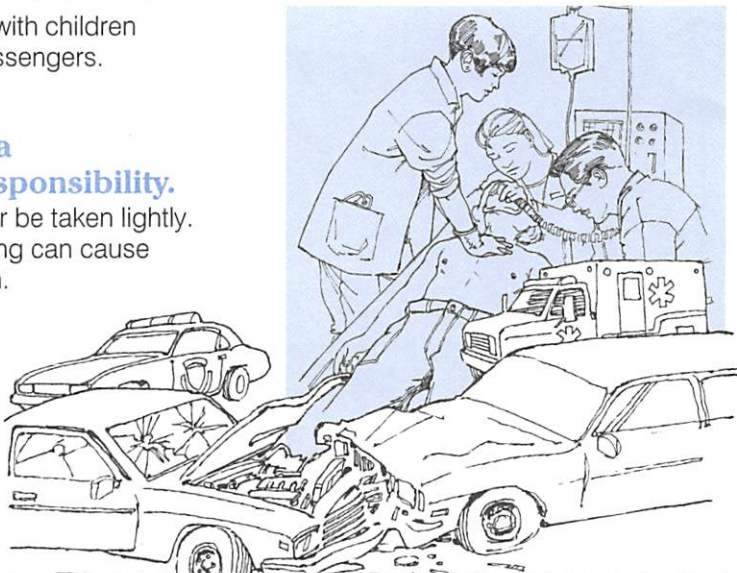
For example, a driver is not paying full attention to driving if he or she is:

- trying to perform other tasks, such as eating or reading a map
- using a cellular phone or other electronic device
- interacting with children or other passengers.



Driving is a serious responsibility.

It should never be taken lightly. Careless driving can cause injury or death.



Important Notice

Please read: The publisher has taken care in the preparation of this booklet, but the information it contains does not necessarily describe particular situations you may encounter. You should ask a qualified expert or professional for advice about your particular situation.

It's important to pay attention at all times.

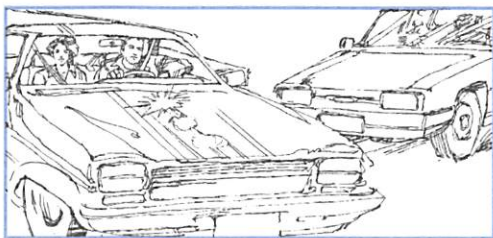
A driver must be prepared to react to:

Other drivers

A safe driver is ready for other drivers who:

- stop suddenly
- turn at the last moment
- drift or swerve
- pull out in front of him or her
- disregard traffic rules, signs or signals.

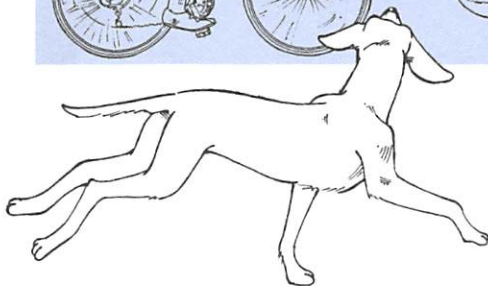
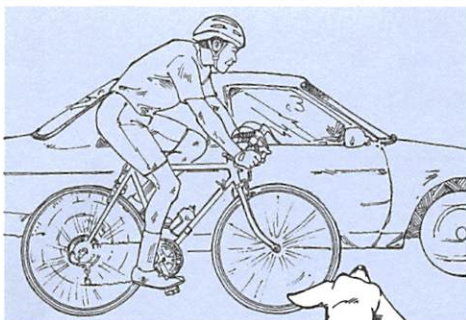
Drivers must also be aware of pedestrians and bicyclists.



Road hazards

These may include:

- work zones
- changing weather or traffic conditions
- animals
- parked or broken-down cars.



A lapse in attention -- even for a second -- can make a dangerous difference.

Trying to perform tasks while driving

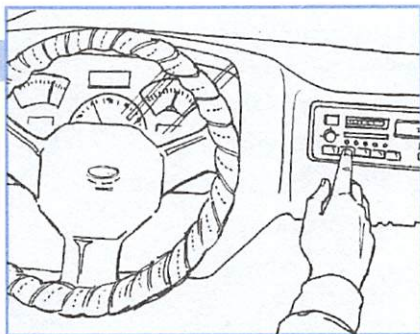
is a common mistake. When driving, avoid:



Doing personal care activities

Examples include:

- applying makeup
- fixing hair
- shaving
- dressing.

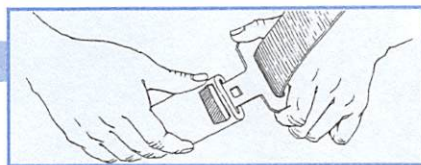


Adjusting car stereos

This means taking your eyes off the road to:

- tune the radio
- change tapes or CDs.

Playing music too loudly can also be distracting.



Making other adjustments

Do these before you drive:

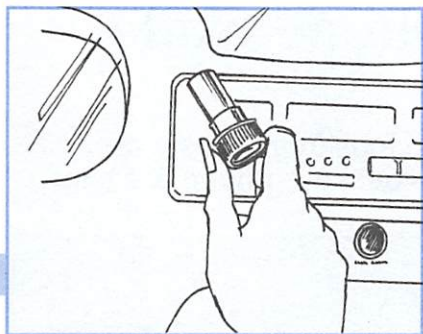
- Fasten safety belts.
- Position mirrors.
- Adjust your seat.

Fiddling with heat or air conditioning can also be a distraction -- try to keep this to a minimum while driving.



Reading

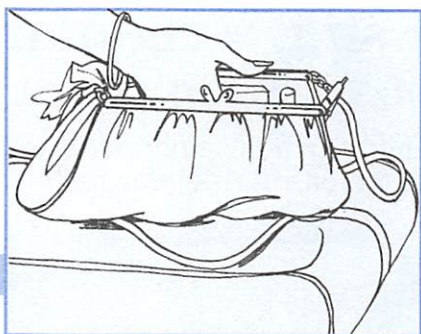
Reading maps, newspapers, books, etc., while driving is dangerous.



Smoking

In addition to its health hazards, smoking can be distracting. You can't focus on driving if you're:

- fumbling for a cigarette, lighter or ashtray
- trying to pick up a dropped cigarette that's lit.



Looking for things

Your eyes aren't on the road if you are:

- searching through a purse, backpack or glove box
- looking for a street name, house number or building.



Eating or drinking

Managing food or drink in a car takes attention away from driving.



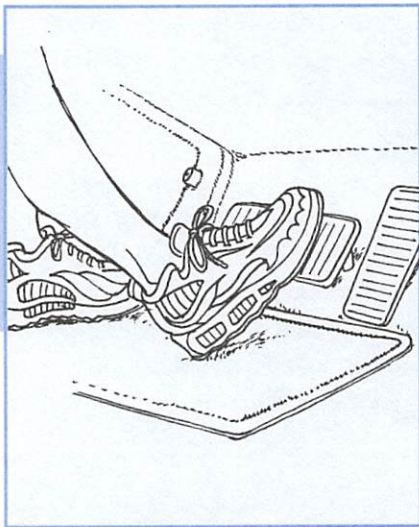
You can prevent these distractions.

- Do things before you drive. For example, choose a tape or CD, and prepare change for tolls.
- Ask for landmarks and other helpful details when taking directions. Review your route before you go.

If you must do any task, pull over safely first.

Using a cellular phone while driving is risky.

Drivers who use phones -- even "hands-free" ones -- are at increased risk of a crash. That's because phone use can:



Interfere with vehicle control

When dialing or talking, a driver may not:

- have both hands on the wheel
- be watching the road
- check mirrors.

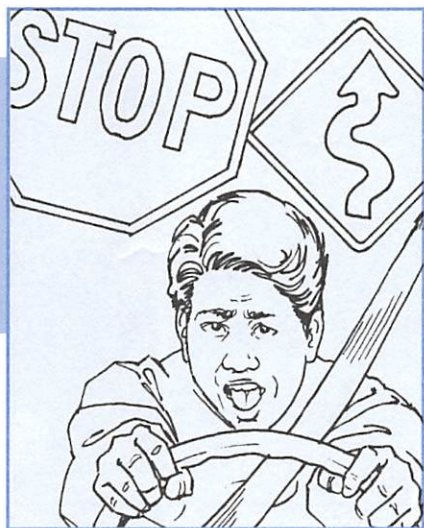
This may cause a driver to drift or swerve.

Slow reaction times

A driver using a phone may take longer to:

- apply his or her brakes
- respond to changes in traffic and road conditions.

It may be illegal in your town or state to talk on a hand-held cellular phone while driving.



Affect driver awareness

A driver using a phone cannot concentrate fully on driving. The driver may not notice:

- his or her speed
- what's going on around him or her
- an upcoming hazard.

Emotional phone conversations are especially dangerous when driving.

To reduce the risk of a car crash:

- Pull safely off the road to make calls.
- Don't answer -- or say you'll call back -- if you receive a call when driving.

Driving with children can be distracting.

They may fight with each other or demand the driver's attention. To help keep the situation under control:



Make sure children are properly restrained.

- Make sure a child uses the safety seat that's right for his or her age and size. When he or she reaches about 4'9", insist on safety belts. It's the law in every state.
- Seat all children in the back. (This is a must for children age 12 or under.) Never install a child safety seat in a seat that has a front air bag.*

These measures can help protect children in a crash. But they can also help prevent distracted driving.

Provide entertainment.

Let children bring storybooks, coloring books or quiet games on trips. But don't allow:

- sharp objects, such as pencils
- large toys that could block the driver's vision, such as a balloon
- toys that make loud noises -- these could startle the driver.

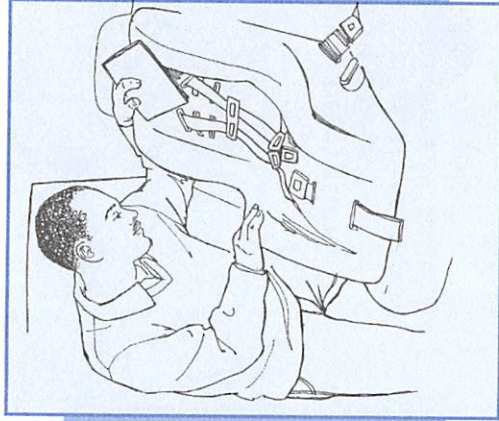
*If your vehicle has no back seat or you are absolutely unable to avoid transporting a child in the front seat, see a dealer or mechanic for information about a front air bag on/off switch. Also, if you have side air bags alongside seats occupied by children, ask the vehicle manufacturer if the side air bags should be deactivated. If you have questions, call the Auto Safety Hotline at 1-888-327-4236.



Stop the car when necessary.

Pull over safely:

- before taking a child out of a safety seat or safety belt for any reason
 - to place a child back in a restraint, if he or she has taken it off
 - if a child's behavior becomes distracting.
- Never try to discipline a child or tend to a crying baby while driving.

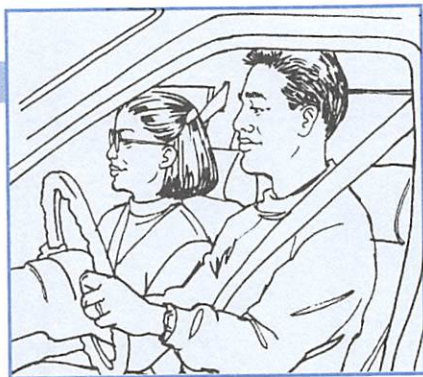


Tips for safety seat and safety belt use:

- Set an example. If you wear your safety belt, your child will be more willing to wear his or hers.
- Be firm. Tell your child you will not start the car until he or she is buckled up.
- Make sure safety seats are properly installed and adjusted. Check the car and seat manufacturers' instructions.*

*To find a safety seat fitting station near you, contact SeatCheck at www.seatcheck.org or 1-866-SEAT-CHECK (1-866-732-8243).

Avoid other distractions.



Limit interaction with passengers.

Just talking while driving is enough to cause distraction. But if you do, avoid:

- taking your eyes off the road
- using your hands when you talk
- having emotional or intense conversations.

Avoid driver fatigue.

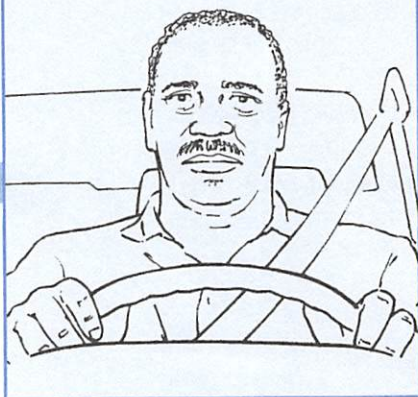
Not only is this dangerous, it could get you into legal trouble. Be sure to follow these tips:

- Do not drive if you are drowsy. If you start to feel this way while driving, pull over to a safe place and rest.
- Share the driving on long trips.
- Stay focused on the task at hand. Don't daydream or fall into a fixed stare.

Don't drive when angry or upset.

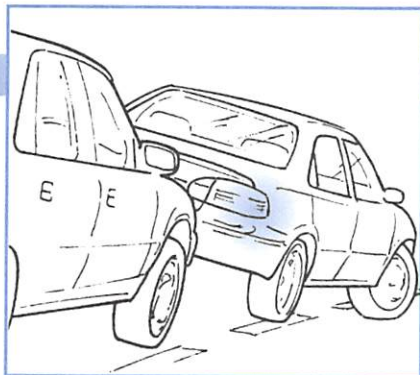
Emotions can interfere with safe driving. Wait until you have cooled down or resolved problems to drive.

**REST AREA
AHEAD
2 miles**



Safety in special areas

It's especially important to stay focused when driving:

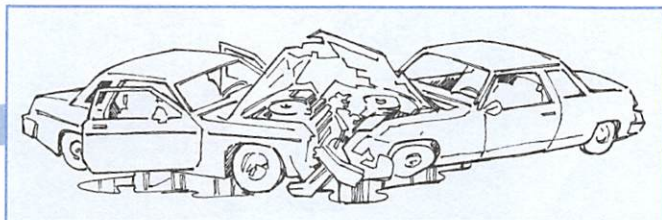


On a highway or freeway

- Stay with the flow of traffic. Only use the left-hand lane to pass.
- Use caution when merging or changing lanes.
- Do not tailgate. If someone tailgates you, move out of the way when it's safe to do so.
- Try to wait for a rest stop if you must pull over. If you must use the breakdown lane, pull as far off of the road as possible.

Through a work zone

- Slow down -- most zones have reduced speed limits.
- Watch for construction vehicles and workers.
- Be prepared for lane changes -- for example, lanes may split or become narrow.



Avoid slowing down to look at a crash or other activity.

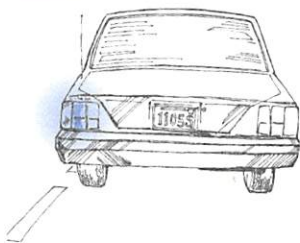
Always drive defensively.

This can help protect you against distracted drivers and other dangers.



Be prepared to react.

Always look well ahead when driving. But don't have "tunnel vision" -- be aware of what's happening all around you.

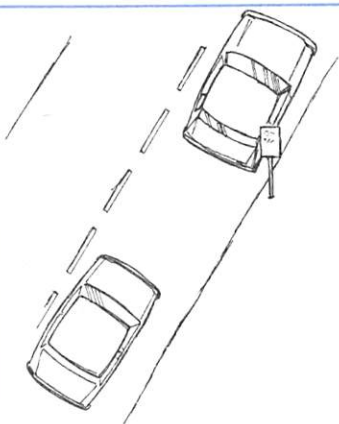


Use your turn signal.

This lets others know your intentions. Signal every time you are going to:

- turn
- change lanes
- get on or off a ramp.

Make sure your signal is off after you complete the move.



Leave enough space between vehicles.

Keep a safe distance from cars around you. To avoid following too closely:

- Pick a point up ahead, such as a road sign.
- When the car in front of you passes the point, begin counting slowly.

If you reach the point before counting to 3, you are following too closely.



Follow traffic rules.

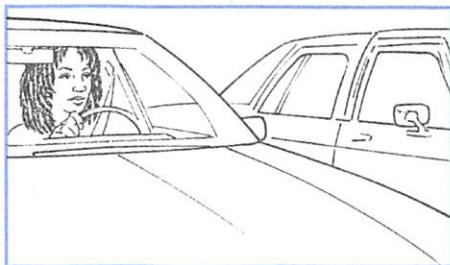
Obey speed limits, signs and signals.

Avoid confrontations.

Do not:

- challenge other drivers
- take other drivers' mistakes personally
- return gestures
- use your horn to express anger or frustration
- flash your lights at a driver who is going "too slow."

Be patient and courteous.
Give other drivers the benefit of the doubt.



Recognize problem drivers.

Give plenty of room to a driver who:

- is doing other things while driving
- seems confused or preoccupied (for example, is driving very slowly)
- drifts, swerves or weaves -- he or she may be distracted, drowsy or under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

Call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number to report a reckless driver or other road incident.

Always take driving seriously. Being too confident about your abilities can be dangerous.

More tips for safe driving



Use extra caution in bad weather.

- Drive at a slower speed. Give yourself plenty of time to get places.
- Leave extra space between cars -- it may take longer to stop on wet or icy roads.
- Don't brake too hard or accelerate too quickly.



Keep up vehicle maintenance.

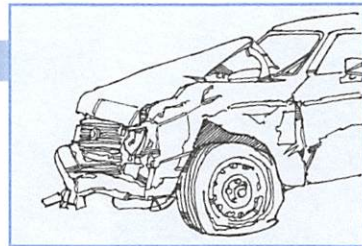
Make sure:

- brakes, lights, horn and other parts are in working order
- you always have enough gas, oil and other fluids.



Always wear your safety belt.

It's the law in most states. Make sure passengers wear theirs, too.



**ALCOHOL
AND
OTHER
DRUGS**

Never drive while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

This is a leading cause of car crashes.

Don't be driven to distraction.

Respect the task of driving

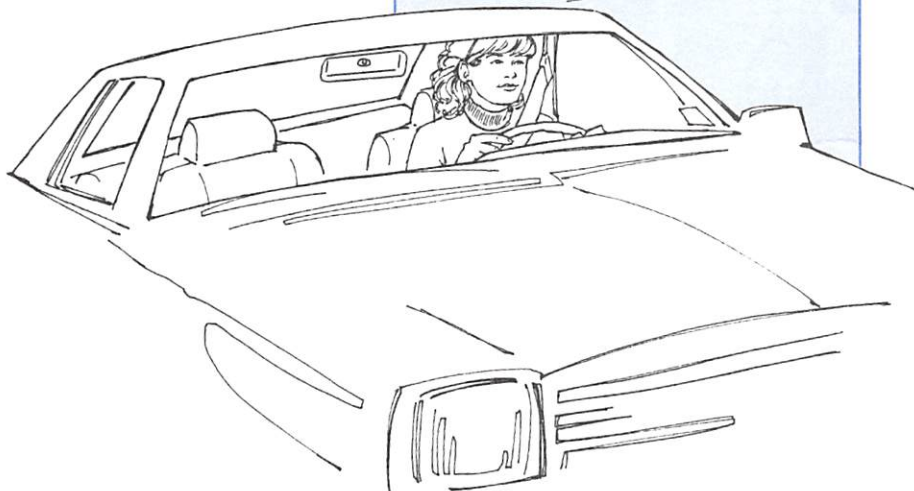
-- it requires your full attention.

Make adjustments before you drive

-- and pull over when necessary.

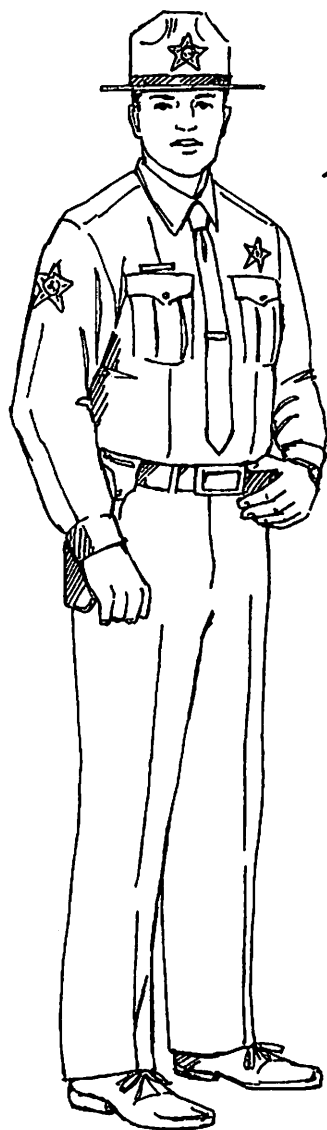
Drive defensively

-- every time you get behind the wheel.



Keep your focus on the road -- and take pride in being a safe driver!

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL SHERIFF



Be a
**Crime
Stopper**
Report suspicious
activities to your
local sheriff.



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