

Three reasons drivers get distracted behind the wheel

Talking to a passenger or adjusting the radio may seem insignificant, but these actions take attention away from the primary task of operating a vehicle. Any distractions, whether for a minute or just a few seconds, can endanger the lives of the driver, his or her passengers, other drivers and even bystanders.

Three main types of driving distractions

- **Visual:** Taking your eyes off the road ahead
- **Physical:** Taking one or more hands off the steering wheel to perform another task (e.g., reaching, eating, drinking, dialing a phone)
- **Cognitive:** Taking your mind off the task of driving

Most people understand that taking their eyes off the road can lead to a crash, but many underestimate the danger of cognitive distraction. These mental activities, while many just think of as multi-tasking, can cause inattention blindness diverting focus from the road and impairing our ability to react promptly to hazards.

Some examples of common distractions

- Texting or talking on a cell phone
- Eating and drinking
- Conversations with passengers
- Grooming
- Reading, including maps
- Using an electronic navigation system
- Adjusting an entertainment console or device

Steps you can take to help promote driver safety

In an ideal world, you would eliminate any and all distractions that divert drivers' attention from the road. Since that is not practical, consider these tips for your business:

- **Include guidance** on avoiding distracted driving in your company's driver's handbook.
- **Ask employees** to sign a pledge form, committing to safe and courteous driving.
- **Remind managers and supervisors** not to call employees when they are driving.
- **Monitor individual operators' performance** using telematics, How's My Driving? programs, or in-cabin cameras.
- **Use devices or apps** that lock down phones and tablets while in motion (some cellular providers offer free apps for automated responses).
- **Encourage drivers** to find a safe spot away from traffic if they need to make a call.
- **Take appropriate actions** to address drivers who violate safe driving policies.
- **Educate drivers** on lifestyle adjustments, including proper nutrition, sleep environment, fitness, weight management, and avoiding excessive caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol.

References

[Driver Electronic Device Users in 2022](#), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. 2022.



For assistance with risk management services or safety resources, contact us at RMSolutions@nationwide.com or 1-800-260-1356.