

## Preventing Distracted Driving



Driving is one of the most safety-critical tasks in any operation. Whether operating a vehicle, utility truck, or heavy equipment, staying focused behind the wheel is essential. Distracted driving puts employees, pedestrians, and the public at risk. Even a momentary lapse in attention can have serious consequences.

### What Is Distracted Driving?

Distracted driving is any activity that diverts attention from driving. It typically falls into three categories:

1. **Visual** – Taking your eyes off the road
2. **Manual** – Taking your hands off the wheel
3. **Cognitive** – Taking your mind off driving

#### Common distractions include:

- Using a phone or radio
- Eating or drinking
- Adjusting controls or GPS
- Talking to passengers
- Daydreaming or fatigue
- Reaching for items in the vehicle
- Reading maps, paperwork, or digital screens
- Grooming (e.g., shaving, applying makeup)
- Looking at roadside incidents or scenery
- Interacting with pets or unsecured cargo

### Why It Matters

Drivers often operate in high-traffic, pedestrian-heavy, and unpredictable environments. Distracted driving can lead to:

- Collisions with other vehicles or property
- Injuries to employees or members of the public
- Legal and financial consequences
- Damage to public trust

### Key Practices to Prevent Distracted Driving

#### 1. Put Devices Away

- Turn off or silence phones while driving
- Use hands-free systems only when absolutely necessary
- Never text, email, or browse while operating a vehicle

#### 2. Prepare Before You Drive

- Set your GPS, climate controls, and music before starting the vehicle
- Review your route and schedule in advance
- Secure loose items that could shift or fall

#### 3. Stay Mentally Engaged

- Avoid multitasking or thinking about unrelated work
- Take breaks if you feel tired or distracted
- Practice mindfulness to stay present and alert

#### 4. Follow Organizational Policy

- Adhere to all policies regarding mobile device use and safe driving
- Report any unsafe conditions or distractions encountered on the road

#### 5. Lead by Example

- Model safe driving behavior for coworkers and the public
- Speak up if you observe distracted driving among team members