

Eliminate Distracted Driving

Even a moment's distraction can be dangerous for you as a driver and to everyone around you on the road. Based on a recent Canadian Automobile Association time trial, replying to a text message takes an average of 33.6 seconds. If you're driving on a residential road, this means you may have missed 85 parked cars, 36 houses or 5 intersections. Maybe you didn't see the vehicle that was backing down a driveway or maybe it was the young cyclists who may have suddenly turned into your path. Just imagine what else you may have missed, and the consequences that could follow.

Distracted driving is one of the great unreported traffic safety problems facing Canadians today. Evidence available on distracted driving paints an incomplete picture of the risks posed by distractions. Only a handful of studies have been conducted on the subject. Earlier studies had suggested driver distractions were estimated to cause between 20 and 40 per cent of all collisions. The most recent data available today concludes that 8 out of every 10 collisions are caused by driver distractions.

***Tips for Eliminating Driver Distractions*****MOTORISTS**

As a motorist, there are elements within the vehicle that you can control to minimize the distractions to which you will be most susceptible while driving. Though some of these distractions may not seem threatening, remember that in just two seconds of distraction, you will travel almost 30 metres at a speed of 50 km/hr. A lot can happen in that distance.

Before getting behind the wheel, use these tips to reduce preventable distractions:

Eat/drink before you get in the car. It may not seem like much, but taking time to eat breakfast or a snack before you leave means you can concentrate on the road — and keep both hands on the wheel, where they should be.

Turn off your cell phone or put it away.

Pre-program radio stations, fill your CD deck, and/or choose your music playlist before you start the car.

Prepare your children for the trip. When you buckle them in, make sure kids have easy access to any toys or snacks you want them to have on each leg of the trip. In-vehicle DVD players can be very distracting for the driver, but if you feel you must have one, have it installed out of sight of the driver and in a way that precludes operation by the driver while driving. If, during the drive, your young passengers begin to fight, cry, or ask for something, pull over at a safe time and place and tend to their needs while stopped.

Finish your personal grooming before you leave home. Applying lipstick or tying your tie while driving is not only a two-handed distraction — it's also a good way to injure yourself!

Keep the conversation light and to a minimum. If you're driving with a passenger, let them know their safety is your first priority, not your conversation.

Secure loose items on your dash, rear view mirror or vacant seats. If you can't secure these items, put them in your trunk, or leave them at home. Sharp turns or abrupt stops will cause these things to fly — creating a (noisy) distraction.

Review maps and directions before leaving. If possible, ask a passenger to be your navigator so you can concentrate on the road while they read the map and watch for signs and landmarks.



source: Canadian Automobile Association <http://www.caa.ca/working-for-you/safe-driving/distracted-driving/>

Education and Training

The Saskatchewan Safety Council offers various training and education related to safe driving. Visit www.sasksafety.org or call 306.757.3197 to find out more.

Safety Talk Discussion

Be Accountable: Choose safety - work safe - and go home injury free!