

DISTRACTED DRIVING

Commercial Fleet Managers in all industry groups, including the wood and lumber industry, have growing concerns regarding the issue of distracted driving. Distracted driving relates to any activity that could divert a person's attention away from the primary task of driving. All distractions endanger driver, passenger, and bystander safety. Driver distractions could include one or more of the following:

- Texting
- Eating/Drinking
- Grooming
- Cellular phone usage
- Reading (maps, directions)
- Adjusting the radio/CD/MP3
- Talking to passengers
- Watching a video
- Using navigation system

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STATISTICS

The research, statistics and trends are too much to ignore. Distracted driving, particularly the use of mobile devices while driving, poses a serious threat to the safety of everyone on the road. Consider these staggering facts and you'll see why that call, text or tweet can be the difference between life or death.

- The relative risk of being in a traffic accident while using a cellphone is similar to the hazard associated with driving with a blood alcohol level at the legal limit.
- In 2013, 3,154 people were killed in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers. A recent study estimated 9% of drivers (or 1.2 million) are visibly speaking into either a handheld or hands-free mobile device.
- In 2012, 540 pedestrians were killed in distraction-related crashes.
- Engaging in visual-manual subtasks (such as reaching for a phone, dialing and texting) associated with the use of hand-held phones and other portable devices tripled the risk of getting into a crash. Headset cell phone use is not substantially safer than hand-held use.
- The highest percentage of accidents occurred just before lunch, between 11 a.m. and noon, for both sales and fleet drivers. A total of 76.6% of commercial vehicle accidents occurred on a clear day.
- Sending a text message takes a driver's eyes off the road for an average of five seconds. That's similar to driving the length of a football field at 55 mph (88 km) with your eyes closed.

TIPS FOR TAKING ACTION AGAINST DISTRACTED DRIVING

- **PRE-TRIP ROUTINE** – Prior to driving, turn off your phone, set your GPS, familiarize yourself with the controls (seats, mirrors, sound system, and climate controls), and stow other electronic devices. If it is a potential distraction, address it before you begin driving or after you are safely parked.
- **BUSINESS IN THE CAR** – Do not use your commute time (or any time you are driving) to make sales calls or participate in conference calls – even if just listening in. Always pull over to a safe location to take or make calls and check messages.
- **MOBILE DEVICES OFF** – Avoid the temptation to talk or text on your phone; simply turn off and stow your device before you begin driving. No call or text is that important.
- **MANAGE YOUR TECHNOLOGY** – If you're having trouble breaking the habit of using your mobile device while driving, consider using a call and text blocking app to let others know you are driving and to queue calls and texts until you are safely pulled over. (i.e. DriveMode®, Lifesaver®, DriveOff®, TextBuster®, DriveScribe®, Canary®, etc.)



- **HELP OTHERS** – Make it a practice to discontinue talking to anyone you know is currently driving.
- **BE AN ADVOCATE** – If you are a passenger and the driver is not focusing on the road, don't be afraid to speak up! Offer to help with directions or even make a call or send a text on his or her behalf. You'll be looking out for your own safety, as well as that of the driver, the other passengers and those sharing the road with you.
- **BE A ROLE MODEL** – Kids can be great enforcers. If they know your rule is "no phone use while driving," they'll remind you to hang it up if you slip up. Remember that they will do what you do. Even if your kids are far from the age of becoming a driver, demonstrate now the behavior you'll expect from them. Set the right example concerning the use of mobile devices while driving.

For further information on distracted driving, please visit www.plmilm.com/additional-resources/ or contact the Loss Control Services Department of PLM/ILM at 800.752.1895.