

SPEED

THE PROBLEM

While speeding is dangerously common, it is also a complicated behavior that varies by driver and situation. Speeding directly contributes to traffic injury severity and is estimated to be involved in about one-third of all U.S. traffic fatalities.¹

Speeding reduces a driver's ability to steer safely, increases the vehicle's stopping distance which extends the distance traveled while the driver reacts to a dangerous situation.

THE DRIVER

PERCEPTIONS OF SPEEDING

Longer trips can increase the temptation to speed. Some drivers speed during short trips, depending on the situation, or believe they can get away with it where traffic zones change. Still others belong to a group of drivers who make a habit of speeding.

Driving skills can't compensate for excessive speed. A driver should determine at what speed he or she can safely operate the vehicle and how to adapt when driving conditions change. Drivers should consider:

- The legal speed limit
- Weather and visibility/sightline
- Traffic conditions
- A vehicle's weight, center of gravity, load, and stability
- The effect speed has on stopping distance
- Road surface conditions
- Road configuration (e.g., curvy, hilly, flat, etc.)
- Their physical and emotional condition

It Happens

The driver was running late making a delivery and was speeding. When traffic came to a halt from road construction, the driver could not stop in time and struck the rear of another vehicle. This caused a four-car chain reaction, resulting in multiple serious injuries.

THE RECOMMENDATION

A CHANGE IN BEHAVIOR

Posted speed, ticket speed, and safe speed seem to represent "set points" identified by drivers. While the posted speed is perceived as a technical limit, drivers have different interpretations about how fast they can drive before receiving a ticket and what is considered a "safe" speed. These perceptions, along with each situation and the driver's personality and past experiences, influence his/her pattern of speeding. Resist the temptation to speed and eliminate the need to rush by allowing ample time to reach your destination safely.

Deliberate speeders represent a distinct driver type.² Their behaviors and attitudes are outside of the norm, and they tend to have a favorable attitude toward speeding. They speed substantially more than other drivers, and often engage in more aggressive and deliberate types of speeding. The deliberate speeders also reported engaging in other risky driving behaviors more frequently. Consider your own behavior and attitude toward speeding. Set a good example for your company by driving at a speed appropriate for the conditions, but in no event exceeding the posted speed limit. Changing these attitudes and behaviors can help reduce speeding-related crashes.

Employee Survey

- Do you accelerate when a traffic light turns yellow?
- Do you decrease your speed during bad weather or in road construction zones?
- Do you make a full stop at stop signs?



¹National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Motivations for Speeding, DOT HS 811 672. October 2012.
²National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Motivations for Speeding—Additional Data Analysis, DOT HS 812 250. March 2016.

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ATTENTION

THE PROBLEM

Attentiveness is one of the most important factors separating good drivers from poor ones. In fact, a high percentage of accidents are caused by inattentive or distracted drivers. Driving is so much a part of everyday life that it becomes a habit, so we allow our minds to wander when we are behind the wheel. Compound a wandering mind with a cell phone, radio, food, or an item out of reach, and the situation can quickly become out of control.

It's impossible for the human brain to fully focus on two tasks at once. Many drivers do not understand that when they are distracted or attempting to "multi-task," they are dramatically increasing their chances of being involved in a serious crash. Distractions reduce our reaction time, and narrow our field of vision and perception. Drivers may "see" their driving environment, but their brains don't successfully interpret "what" is being seen.

THE DRIVER

SPACE MANAGEMENT

Attentiveness includes continuously managing the space around your vehicle. Maintaining a safe distance from others gives you a better opportunity to respond to changing conditions. Position the vehicle in a way that does not impede other motorists. Failing to maintain a safe distance is unsafe and can reflect poorly on your business.

Drive in a lane that offers the best mobility and the least traffic interruption.

Employee Survey

- Do you multi-task (use a cell phone, GPS, map) while driving?
- Do you ever closely follow the vehicle in front of you?
- Do you pass even when visibility is obscured?



THE RECOMMENDATION

HAZARD DETECTION and VISUAL SCANNING

Successfully detecting hazards requires vigilance. You must constantly pay attention to weather and road and traffic conditions that could lead to a crash; for example, debris, slippery surfaces, dangerous curves, traffic congestion, construction zones, emergency vehicles, etc.

You should also be aware of other motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians on the road who may act erratically or recklessly, or whose actions may signal a hazard ahead. For example, a vehicle may swerve suddenly to avoid debris in the road—debris you'll need to avoid split seconds later.

Being able to respond safely to hazards requires proper visual scanning. Glance quickly at both sides of the road to observe roadside activity and the behavior of adjacent vehicles. Frequently check all mirrors, particularly before changing speed or direction.

Continuously monitor overtaking traffic to remain aware of vehicles at your rear and side blind spots. Also, remain alert when approaching high pedestrian traffic areas such as malls, hospitals, churches, and schools. Slow down near these areas and pay close attention.

COMMUNICATION

Communicate your intentions to other drivers by properly using turn signals and brake lights. Use your horn only during emergencies.

While it's important to communicate your maneuvers to fellow motorists, other types of communication can interfere with attentiveness and become a dangerous distraction, so refrain from texting or speaking on a cell phone while behind the wheel.

It Happens

As a driver was approaching an intersection with a traffic light, he became distracted reading a movie marquee. He ran the red light and collided with another vehicle, killing the driver and severely injuring himself.

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FATIGUE

THE PROBLEM

Fatigue can have a significant impact on your ability to safely operate a motor vehicle. A tired driver is an unsafe driver.

THE DRIVER

SIGNS OF FATIGUE

No one is immune to the effects of fatigue. If you notice any of the following behaviors, you may be too tired to drive safely:

- Difficulty focusing, frequent blinking, or heavy eyelids
- Trouble keeping your head up
- Yawning repeatedly or rubbing your eyes
- Daydreaming; wandering/disconnected thoughts
- Trouble remembering the last few miles driven
- Missing exits or traffic signs
- Tailgating or failing to maintain speed
- Drifting from your lane or hitting a rumble strip

THE RECOMMENDATION

EXTREME DRIVING CONDITIONS

Adverse weather conditions and extreme road configurations require special driving techniques and greater alertness. These stressors may cause fatigue more quickly than usual. Reducing the potential for fatigue in these situations requires preparation.

For cold weather driving, remove snow and ice from windows, mirrors, brakes, lights, and hand and toe holds. Install tire chains if necessary. For large trucks, expel moisture from the air tanks after each trip, and check for ice accumulation on the brakes, slack adjuster, air hoses, wiring, and radiator shutters. Once on the road, anticipate poor conditions and adjust your speed and driving technique accordingly. For hot weather driving, inspect the tires, lubrication, and cooling system components.

It Happens

A fatigued driver had stopped to buy coffee and snacks. The driver later fell asleep and crossed the center line striking a car head-on. One of the other car's two occupants was killed and the other was severely injured.



SLEEP ROUTINE

Driving on six hours of sleep almost doubles your chances of being involved in a motor vehicle crash and less than four hours of sleep increases your chances more than eleven times*. To help prevent fatigue and drowsy driving, make sleep a priority. Reserve adequate time for sleeping and encourage others to not disturb you. Trying a relaxing routine before going to bed, reducing light and sound, limiting caffeine and alcohol intake, or purchasing a new mattress may help.

You may also want a medical consultation if a sleep problem persists. A periodic medical exam may also reveal a sleep disorder. Discuss appropriate treatment options with your provider.

NIGHT OPERATION

Fatigue often occurs while driving at night when your ability to see clearly is already diminished. Adjust your speed, following distance, and gap selection to nighttime conditions. Make sure you don't overdrive your headlights. Use high beams where permitted, but dim them when meeting an oncoming vehicle. Should other vehicles use their high beams, look toward the right side of the road and do not retaliate.

Employee Survey

- Do you drive when sleepy and find it hard to keep your eyes open?
- Have you ever been unable to recall changing lanes?
- Do you stay up late and go to work tired?



*USA Today article at <http://usat.ly/2gKoLQD>. AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, Acute Sleep Deprivation and Risk of Motor Vehicle Crash Involvement Fact Sheet, page 2. <https://www.aaaafoundation.org/sites/default/files/AcuteSleepDeprivationCrashRiskFS.pdf>

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EMOTION

THE PROBLEM

Recognizing how and why you react to adverse situations helps you maintain control of emotions and your vehicle. Don't let a poor attitude get in the way of a safe trip. This includes controlling reactions to other drivers' mistakes. A negative attitude can affect your ability to concentrate on safe driving.

THE DRIVER

MENTAL PREPAREDNESS

Brake failures, tire blowouts, emergency stops, and evasive maneuvers are all stressful situations. Keeping a level head during an emergency is critical to helping prevent accidents. Some emergency situations may only require stopping in the shortest possible distance. In others, where a collision cannot be avoided, it is often better to maintain a straight path and avoid making evasive maneuvers. A sudden stop or turn can result in disastrous consequences, which might be avoided by simply running over a small object on the road. These damages may be minor compared to a head-on collision or other crash. Swerving to miss a small animal may not be your best move.

Mentally rehearsing ahead of time how you might react to different scenarios could save your life and the lives of others.

Employee Survey

- Do you take more risks when you are in a hurry?
- Do you yell or honk at other drivers that make you angry?
- Do you drive without wearing a safety belt?



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ROAD RAGE

Most people immediately think of "road rage" when a driver is angry, aggressive, or frustrated. These drivers are extremely dangerous. They might yell, honk, or use their vehicle, other objects or weapons. These situations should not be provoked.

Whether you are the "aggressor" or "victim" of road rage, the potential for a crash is heightened.

Road rage is often caused by situational and/or personal triggers that can be classified into three categories:

- **Environmental factors:** aggressive driving habits, traffic congestion, noise, and time constraints
- **Intrusive responses:** retaliating against another's perceived careless driving
- **Territorial defensiveness:** defending one's personal space

THE RECOMMENDATION

You can help avoid road rage by understanding your triggers. Never assume another driver's acts were intentional or directed toward you. It is more likely the individual simply made a mistake or was reacting to an unseen hazard. Focus on what you can control, not the actions of other drivers.

Consider your own safety attitude when driving.

- Begin early enough to avoid rushing
- Stay within the speed limit
- Keep a safe distance and don't tailgate
- Signal your lane changes
- Leave plenty of room for merging traffic
- Monitor your physical and emotional condition
- Relax and concentrate on driving

It Happens

The driver had passed the same vehicle several times. With frustration mounting, the driver passed the vehicle again but lost control while trying to change lanes quickly in front of it. The vehicle rolled several times killing the driver, two other passengers, and injuring three others.

EMPLOYEE SURVEY: HOW IS YOUR DRIVING?

Use the questions in this employee survey as discussion points to help raise awareness of risky driving behaviors.

RISK
SPEED
Do you accelerate when a traffic light turns yellow?
Do you drive the normal speed even in bad driving conditions (road construction, rain, ice, or snow.)?
Do you make a full stop at stop signs?
ATTENTION
Do you try to multi-task (use a cell phone, GPS, map) while driving?
Do you closely follow the vehicle in front of you?
Do you pass even when visibility is obscured?
FATIGUE
Do you drive when sleepy and find it hard to keep your eyes open?
Do you drive and not remember changing lanes?
Do you stay up late and go to work tired?
EMOTION
Do you take more risks when you're in a hurry?
Do you yell or honk at other drivers that make you angry?
Do you drive without wearing a safety belt?

Which behaviors will you change to help you make it home safe today?

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The Dangers of Distracted Driving

HANDOUT

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports that motor vehicle fatalities have declined in recent years.

- Modern cars have better safety features, including air bags, antilock brakes, and traction control.
- Each year, a higher number of drivers and passengers are using seat belts.
- Unfortunately, however, increased use of cell phones and other mobile devices has increased the number of deaths caused by distracted driving.

Distracted driving is any nondriving activity that takes the driver's attention from the primary task of operating the vehicle and increases the risk of crashing. There are three main types of distraction:

- Visual—taking your eyes off the road
- Manual—taking your hands off the wheel
- Cognitive—taking your mind off your driving

Common activities that can distract a driver include:

- Using a mobile device
- Texting
- Eating, drinking, or grooming
- Talking to passengers
- Reading, including map reading
- Using a GPS or navigation system
- Watching a video
- Manipulating vehicle entertainment system controls

Using a cell phone while driving delays a driver's reactions as much as having a blood alcohol concentration at the legal limit of .08 percent.

- Talking with another passenger can also be distracting, but a passenger may warn the driver if there is suddenly a dangerous situation on the road.

The NHTSA estimates that nearly half a million people are injured and more than 3,000 die annually in crashes involving a distracted driver. Most dangerous of all is texting because it involves all three types of distraction—visual, manual, and cognitive.

- Research shows that drivers who send and receive text messages take their eyes off the road for an average of 4.6 seconds out of every 6 seconds while texting.
- At 55 miles per hour, this means the driver is traveling the length of a football field, including the end zones (120 yards), without looking at the road.
- Drivers who text are 20 times more likely to get into an accident than non-distracted drivers.

If you must use your phone, follow these safety practices.

- Limit cell phone calls to emergencies, and use a hands-free phone during these situations.
- Avoid texting, accessing the internet, and making routine cell phone calls while driving.
- Think—Is it really necessary this very minute?

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The Dangers of Distracted Driving

TRAINER OUTLINE

Goals: This safety session will teach trainees:

- How important concentration is for safe driving.
- How many accidents are caused by distracted driving.

Applicable Regulation: General Duty Clause Sec. 5 (b)

- 1. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports that motor vehicle fatalities have declined in recent years.**
 - Modern cars have better safety features, including air bags, antilock brakes, and traction control.
 - Every year, more drivers and passengers are using seat belts.
 - Unfortunately, however, increased use of cell phones and other mobile devices has increased the number of accidents and deaths caused by distracted driving.
- 2. Distracted driving is any nondriving activity that takes the driver's attention from the primary task of operating the vehicle and increases the risk of crashing. There are three main types of distraction:**
 - Visual—taking your eyes off the road
 - Manual—taking your hands off the wheel
 - Cognitive—taking your mind off your driving
- 3. Common activities that can distract a driver include:**
 - Using a mobile device
 - Texting
 - Eating and drinking
 - Talking to passengers
 - Grooming
 - Reading, including map reading
 - Using a GPS or navigation system
 - Watching a video
 - Manipulating vehicle entertainment system controls
- 4. Using a cell phone while driving delays a driver's reactions as much as having a blood alcohol concentration at the legal limit of .08 percent.**
 - This is true, whether it's a hand-held or hands-free device, according to a University of Utah study.
 - Carnegie Mellon reports that driving while using a cell phone reduces the amount of brain activity associated with driving by 37 percent.
 - Talking with another passenger can also be distracting, but a passenger may warn the driver if there suddenly is a dangerous situation on the road.
 - A passenger may also have enough sense to stop talking if traffic becomes very heavy. The caller on the other end of a cell phone conversation has no idea about road conditions or sudden danger.

5. The NHTSA estimates that nearly half a million people are injured and more than 3,000 die annually in crashes involving a distracted driver.

- The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety reports that drivers who use hand-held devices are four times as likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves.
- Younger, inexperienced drivers under 20 years old have the highest proportion of distraction-related fatal crashes, but drivers of all ages create a hazard when they try to do two things at once.

6. The most dangerous type of distracted driving is texting because it involves all three types of distraction—visual, manual, and cognitive.

- Research shows that drivers who send and receive text messages take their eyes off the road for an average of 4.6 seconds out of every 6 seconds while texting.
- At 55 miles per hour, this means the driver is traveling the length of a football field, including the end zones (120 yards), without looking at the road.
- Drivers who text are 20 times more likely to get into an accident than non-distracted drivers.

7. If you must use your phone, follow these safety practices.

- Limit cell phone calls to emergencies, and use a hands-free phone during these situations.
- Avoid texting, accessing the internet, and making routine cell phone calls while driving.
- Think—Is it really necessary to use my phone this very minute?

Discussion Points:

Have any of you had an accident or close call because you or another driver was using a cell phone or texting? Have you made any changes to your own driving habits because of a frightening experience or something you witnessed?

Conclusion: Cell phones and other mobile devices can be wonderful tools—but they can also be the instruments of deadly accidents. Use them carefully to protect yourself and your family.

Test Your Knowledge:

Have your employees take the Dangers of Distracted Driving quiz to see if they understand the many accidents and fatalities caused by distracted drivers or whether they need to review this material again.

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