

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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