

SAFETY BULLETIN: DISTRACTED DRIVING

Are You Distracted???

A distraction is defined as anything that prevents someone from giving their full attention to something else.

Distractions can take on many forms while behind the wheel and can include things such as the use of a mobile device, personal grooming, eating, and adjusting the stereo or comfort controls just to name a few.

Taking your eyes off the road for five seconds at 90 kph to pay attention to something other than driving is the equivalent of driving the length of a football field with your eyes closed. That is a risk that no one should be willing to take.

In an effort to combat these distractions Saskatchewan has passed laws that are aimed at preventing distracted driving.

In 2010 the Federal Motor Carrier Administration (FMCSA) banned drivers of commercial vehicles from texting while driving.

Nearly all ready mixed concrete companies have, at least in part, launched campaigns to raise awareness of the dangers of distracted driving.

Distracted Driving Statistics According to NHTSA and FMCSA– A Grim Reminder

- Every day, approximately eight people in the United States lose their life in a crash involving a distracted driver.
- A 2009 study found that the use of dispatching devices in a CMV increased the risk of being involved in a safety critical event by nine times.
- Data from a video-based analytics platform among trucking fleets, clearly demonstrates that the most distracted drivers are less safe overall, commit significantly more fundamental driving errors, and drive faster than the speed limit compared to all other drivers.
- In Canada, over 25% of vehicle fatalities are due to distracted driving (CAA)

Technology Can Help Too

While smartphones, tablets and digital screens in vehicles can serve as major distraction while driving, there are technologies that can promote focused, safe driving.

There are several apps that can be downloaded onto a mobile device that prevent inbound and outbound calls and texts while the vehicle is in motion.

In most cases these apps still allow for emergency 911 calls and will allow the device to be used when the user is a passenger in the vehicle.

Many employers also utilize the use of onboard cameras and software that record incidents of distracted driving and provide the video as coaching opportunities between drivers and front-line managers.

Through this coaching the driver better understands the risks of taking their eyes off the road, their hands off the wheel or their attention away from driving.

Resources: NHTSA, CDC & FMCSA