MANAGING
OTHER DISTRACTIONS

Sometimes even very common actions can cause distractions and increase the chance of accidents. Before you start your trip, remember to:

- Adjust mirrors and instrument panel lighting before entering the traffic flow.
- Get directions or program the GPS before you put the truck or bus into gear.
- Eat a healthy meal before you get on the road, or pull completely off the road to eat or drink.
- Turn off your cell phone or put it on silent mode and let calls go to voicemail while the vehicle is moving.

The Defeating Distracted Driving commercial driver curriculum includes a 15-minute DVD, a PowerPoint presentation and samples of model company policies governing distracted driving. For more information on the complete curriculum, go to www.cvsa.org.

Defeating Distracted Driving was developed in partnership with:

and a coalition of commercial truck and bus companies, truck and bus safety organizations and driver education entities.

NEVER TEXT OR EMAIL WHILE DRIVING!

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We live in a 24-hour-a-day, information-driven society in which instant communications are an accepted part of life. Data shows that 91% of Americans have a cell phone, and text messaging has increased over 2,200% in the last five years!

Instant communications can make businesses more efficient, increase productivity and bring other benefits to society, including rapid response to emergencies. However, the use of communications devices in moving vehicles can distract the driver’s attention from the primary task of driving and lead to crashes as critical and as devastating as those caused by impaired driving or other dangerous driving behavior.

Distracted driving may now be the single largest contributing factor to traffic crashes. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, distracted driving resulted in nearly 6,000 deaths and more than a half million injuries in 2008.

An in-cab driving study of commercial truck drivers by the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute indicated that by far the most dangerous distraction observed was texting. The study revealed that truck drivers who texted while driving had 23 times the risk of being involved in a crash or a near-crash incident.

Laws that prohibit cell phone use and texting can have an impact on safety, but stopping the senseless crashes and deaths that distractions can cause is best accomplished by changing driver behavior.

To manage or eliminate distractions, it’s important to understand the three distinct types:

- **Visual distractions** that cause the driver to look away from the road and view something unrelated to driving, such as billboards, accident scenes, street signs and other external stimuli.
- **Manual distractions** in which the driver removes one or both hands from the steering wheel or other driving control to perform a non-driving task, such as eating, drinking, adjusting mirrors, tuning the radio or programming a GPS.
- **Cognitive distractions** in which mental thoughts and feelings (anger, anxiety, worry, etc.) distract the driver and divert attention from the road.

And while the news media and regulators have focused primarily on the dangers of texting and hand-held cell phone use in moving vehicles, other types of distractions are equally dangerous.

DON’T MAKE THE SOMETIMES-FATAL MISTAKE OF ATTEMPTING TO MULTI-TASK BEHIND THE WHEEL.

Glancing away from the road for more than one second—for any reason—can be extremely dangerous. At 55 miles per hour, a three-second glance at a cell phone, messaging device or instrument panel will result in the vehicle moving nearly 250 feet down the road—almost the length of a football field!

Short glances at vehicle instrumentation, mirrors, installed communications devices, or other technology can be done safely if these scans are limited to less than one second and are related only to the driving task.

In the rush to be on time for a pick up or delivery deadline, or to get ahead of traffic congestion, don’t make the sometimes-fatal mistake of attempting to multi-task behind the wheel. And never forget that far too many of the drivers sharing the road with you are driving distracted themselves!