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Distracted Driving

A government study concluded that driver distraction or inattention is a factor in over 70 percent of accidents. Drivers are two times more likely to be involved in a crash or near crash when talking on a cell phone, and three times more likely when dialing or operating a cell phone or electronic device.

Applying makeup or reading while driving increases the chance of a crash by 3 times. Inserting a CD doubles the likelihood of an accident. Eating while driving increases odds of an accident by one and a half times. Reaching for a moving object while driving increases chances of an accident by a whopping 9 times, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration study.

The study found that taking your eyes off the road for more than 2 seconds significantly increases chances of an accident. Drowsy drivers are 4 to 6 times more likely to be involved in a crash or near crash than drivers who are attentive.



Common Driver Distractions

- Cell phones and navigation systems: dialing, entering addresses
- Eating food or drinking a beverage
- Talking and listening to other passengers in the vehicle
- Radio use: changing stations, cds, etc.
- Smoking: lighting up, putting out, falling ashes
- Looking at billboards, scenic views, looking for an address
- Daydreaming: problems at home, relationships, etc.
- Attending to children or pets

Things To Do Before Driving

- Get plenty of rest before getting behind the wheel
- Take care of grooming (makeup, hair, shaving, flossing, nails, contacts, etc.)
- Be familiar with your vehicle's controls
- Adjust mirrors, seat and radio
- Safely secure children and pets; stow any loose objects
- Place sun glasses, toll money, etc. within reach

When Operating A Vehicle

- Drive defensively and always wear your seatbelt
- Do not use electronic devices except in an emergency
- Do not read or write anything
- Do not eat or drink, and avoid smoking
- Do not engage in distracting conversations
- Do not pick up or reach for a dropped or loose object
- Pay attention to the road ahead, stay focused and expect the unexpected
- If you feel tired park in a safe place and take a break

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Source: U.S. Dept. of Transportation report "The Impact of Driver Inattention On Near-Crash/Crash Risk" April 2006

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