

Distracted Driving Script Storyboard



Produced by L-3/ D.P. Associates Inc.

L-3/DPA Point of Contact:
PM Name Redacted
Program Manager
L-3 Com / D.P. Associates
Office: 800-123-4567
Email: Redacted@L-3-Comms.com

Submitted to:
SME Name Redacted
Subject Matter Expert
Schneider National Carriers
Phone: 888-123-4567
Email: Redacted@Schneider.com


Presented By:



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Introduction

Welcome

Welcome to the Distracted Driving course for Schneider National. My name is Bob, and I'll be your instructor.

I'm going to cover the various distraction types, and walk you through some common examples. Then I'll show you how to avoid them and stay focused on the road.

... So let's get started!


Introduction

Distracted driving is becoming more and more common.

As today's technology continues to add new devices, the number and complexity of distractions increase.

Whether the distractions are inside or outside the truck, your willingness to be distracted affects how successful you are at overcoming their allure.

Safe, responsible driving is a *choice*. ... And it requires your *full* and *undivided* attention.

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Learning Objectives

The goal of this lesson is to help you recognize and eliminate the distractions that keep you from driving safely.

Once you've completed this lesson, you should be able to:

- Define distracted driving
- Identify different types of distractions
- Describe techniques used to avoid distractions

This course will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

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Overview

Defining Distracted Driving

According to a study conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and Virginia Technical Transportation Institute (VTTI), distracted driving is:

“Anything that diverts the driver’s attention away from the primary tasks of navigating a vehicle and responding to critical events.”


Driver Inattention

How big of a problem is distracted driving?

During a study conducted by NHTSA and VTTI, driver inattention led to nearly 80% of all crashes and 65% of all near-crashes.

Fatalities and Injuries

NHTSA reported that in 2014, nearly 5,000 people died in accidents involving a distracted driver, and more than half a million were injured. In 2013, 5,474 people were killed, and an estimated 448,000 people were injured.

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Distraction Types

Distraction Types

There are four types of driver distractions:


- Visual,
- Auditory,
- Manual, and
- Cognitive

Let's discuss some of the high-risk behaviors from among these distraction types.

Visual Distractions

Visual distractions involve taking your eyes off the road. Some examples include:

- Reading a map,
- Looking at a GPS screen,
- Searching for lost items in the cab,
- Reading a roadside billboard, and
- Watching an accident scene on the side of the road

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Auditory Distractions

Auditory distractions involve sound or noises that interfere with your ability to hear important cues alerting you of potential danger.

These include things like:

- Having a conversation with a passenger,
- Listening to the radio,
- Using your cell phone, and
- Hearing sirens or blaring horns

Cognitive Distractions


Cognitive distractions involve taking your mind off the task of driving. These include examples such as:

- Daydreaming,
- Looking at but not registering what's going on around you,
- Being very tired, and even
- Being bored

Manual Distractions


Manual distractions involve taking your hand off the steering wheel. They can include things like:

- Tuning a radio station,
- Eating or drinking,
- Jotting down some notes,
- Reaching for objects inside the vehicle, and
- Grooming

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Distraction Combinations

And did you know that many of these distractions come in combinations?
Let's take a look at some examples.

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Cell Phone Use

Cell Phones

When using a cell phone while driving, all four types of distractions are at work.

- Cell phones are a visual distraction because you take your eyes off the road to view the screen.
- They're an auditory distraction because you listen and speak during a conversation.
- They're a manual distraction because you use your hands to interact with the device.
- And they're also a cognitive distraction because you concentrate on things other than driving.

In fact, a study conducted by Carnegie Mellon found that driving while using a cell phone reduces the amount of brain activity associated with driving by 37%.

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Delayed Reaction Times

According to research conducted by the University of Utah, cell phone use delays a driver's reaction time to the same extent as a .08% blood alcohol content level.

Using a cell phone behind the wheel is like driving while intoxicated. It takes a driver longer to recognize and respond to important cues necessary to avoid a crash.


And don't be fooled. Delayed reaction time applies to hand-held and hands-free devices. In fact, headsets are not substantially safer than hand-held cell phones, according to a study conducted by VTTI.

Unlike a drunk driver, though, a distracted driver intentionally chooses to divert his attention from the road.

Unintentional Behavior

A driver holding a conversation on a cell phone is more likely to:

- Change lanes unintentionally,
- Fluctuate their speed,
- Miss an exit,
- React more slowly to brake lights in front of them, and
- Give more attention to the person on the other end of the phone than to the road.

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Look But Not Register

According to the National Safety Council, drivers using hand-held and hands-free cell phones tend to look at, but not *register* things in their surroundings.

They estimate these drivers fail to see up to 50% of the information in their environment.

And VTTI studies show that the risk of a crash or near-crash for a truck driver dialing a cell phone is nearly 6 times higher than that of a driver who's not on the phone.


Doing It Anyway

Despite the risks, an NHTSA report estimates that more than 800,000 vehicles are being driven by someone using a hand-held cell phone at any given moment during the day. ... And the numbers continue to increase.

So you might be asking: "If it's *really* so dangerous, why are people doing it *anyway*?"

Even though many drivers readily admit it's unsafe, they make the mistake of thinking: "That's *never* going to happen to me!"

... In general, people tend to *overestimate* their ability to drive while on a cell phone and underestimate the risk.

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Texting while Driving

Of all cell phone related activities, text messaging while driving is the *most* dangerous. It's a technology growing in popularity that completely distracts drivers from the road for *extended* periods of time, ... and substantially increases the risk of accidents.


Drivers who send or receive a text message, take their eyes off the road an average of 4.6 out of every 6 seconds.

Driving at a speed of 55 miles per hour means they will travel the length of a football field without looking at the road for every 6 seconds they're texting.

The human brain can only process *so much* information at one time. So when you're trying to read or type text messages, you're drawing mental resources *away* from your ability to process the traffic situation and avoid a hazard.

Accident Risk

One study even found that drivers who send text messages while driving are 23 times more likely to crash or nearly crash than when not texting.

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Other Electronic Devices

Variety of Electronic Devices

Cell phones are not the only issue though.


More and more drivers are using a variety of electronic devices: navigation systems, tablets, ... even laptops!

Total "Eyes off the Road" Time

These devices are dangerous, because manually operating them draws your eyes away from the road for more than a few seconds at a time.

In fact, the risk of a crash or a near-crash is 7 times higher when using or even reaching for an electronic device.

The bottom line? The more time you spend with your eyes off the road, the higher the risk.

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Frequency

Frequency is also a contributing factor. It's not only the number of seconds your eyes are off the road that matters, but also how *often* you allow yourself to become distracted.

Truck drivers, for instance, use dispatch devices many times during a single shift. Each time they interact with its keyboard, their eyes are down, and it's an opportunity for an accident.


So, keep in mind that how often you're distracted can significantly impact the likelihood of a crash.

Public Awareness

As distracted driving accidents increase, the issue attracts more and more attention.

People are beginning to take it seriously and get involved. Advocacy groups are springing up and speaking out.

Insurance companies are educating the public. Even wireless and electronics industries are striving to make their devices safer to use.

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Electronic Device Use Countermeasures

Here are some strategies to help you avoid becoming distracted by electronic devices while driving:

Using Electronic Devices - General Tips


- Avoid all electronic devices while driving.
- Don't use your cell phone or any other electronic devices while driving, regardless of the current law.
- Don't wait for your employer to tell you not to text or talk on company time, and
- Don't wait for your community to pass a law.

Using a Cell Phone

- Don't make or receive calls while driving.
- Use a cell phone for emergencies only, and even then, pull over to make the call.
- Silence your cell phone to reduce auditory distractions, and
- Allow an incoming call to go to voice mail.

Text Messaging

- Don't send or receive text messages while driving.
- Remember it's against the law.

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Multitasking

Multitasking Overview


Multitasking while behind the wheel has unfortunately become an everyday occurrence.

After all, shifting your attention from the roadway to other tasks impairs your ability to safely control the vehicle.

So far, we've covered one form of multitasking: the use of electronic devices while driving. Now it's time to take a look at some other examples such as:

- Reading a map,
- Jotting down some notes,
- Searching or reaching for lost items in the cab,
- Eating and drinking, and
- Grooming

Let's take a closer look at these high-risk diversions.

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Reading a Map

When you're lost, your stress level rises quickly, and your situational awareness vanishes.

So the next time you're lost and want to look at a map or jot down some notes, don't do it while en route. Pull over and park first.

It's also a good practice to review your route to get a good idea of where you're going before starting all trips.

It's important that you devote your full attention to one task at a time.


Reaching for Objects

Another multitasking example that poses a serious risk is reaching for things inside the cab while you're driving.

Here are some good practices you can adopt to help avoid multitasking while en route.

- Before each trip, secure all loose items that could roll around or shift while you're driving.
- If something falls while you're driving, don't try to pick it up. Pull over and retrieve it once the truck is parked.
- Avoid searching for lost items or reaching for something while driving. Pull over and do something about them once it's safe to do so.

... Let's move on to the next multitasking example: Eating and drinking while driving.

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Eating and Drinking

In today’s fast-paced world, although eating on the go has become commonplace, this behavior can be incredibly distracting and dangerous.

It’s always dangerous to take your eyes off the road and one or both hands off the steering wheel. And you do this when you take the wrapper off of a hamburger, wipe the ketchup off your face, rummage through the bag for napkins. And when try to clean up after you’ve spilled a soda.

Let’s face it, it’s hard to control a vehicle with food or a drink in your hand.


It’s good practice to get in a meal before you leave, and plan time to stop for the next meal.

What’s the Harm in Multitasking?

Some will argue that a few seconds of multitasking while driving is unlikely to cause a problem.

However, drivers are often unable to predict when it’s safe to look away from the road. Situations can change suddenly and unexpectedly, leaving no time to react.

According to a study conducted by the FMCSA, nearly 80% of traffic accidents that involve driver inattention occur within 3 seconds of the incident.

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Multitasking Countermeasures

There are some things you can do to lower your chance of multitasking behind the wheel.

Establish a Pre-Trip Routine:

- Put your cell phone on silent mode,
- Adjust your seat and mirrors,
- Program the radio station pre-sets,
- Adjust the temperature controls, and
- Set up the navigation system.


While en route, be sure to take a break every 2 hours.

And pull over and park the vehicle when you need to:

- Look at a map
- Jot down some notes
- Eat or drink
- Search for lost items
- Reach for something

And if you must bring an electronic device with you, place it in a location where you can't access it while driving.

Commit to driving *without* multitasking. Focus on road and drivers around you.

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Cognitive Distractions

Cognitive Distraction Types


Distractions are everywhere, and we've already covered *many* examples so far. But what about other, more *subtle* forms of distraction?

Cognitive distractions are typically not the first to come to mind. But we are all susceptible to them, and they can wreak havoc on our driving ability.

Some common examples of cognitive distractions are:

- Being preoccupied with what's going on in your personal life,
- Dealing with strong emotions like anger,
- Daydreaming, and
- Becoming drowsy.

And speaking of drowsiness, there's also micro-sleep...

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Micro-Sleep Overview

Micro-sleep is a type of distraction worthy of an in-depth look.

While you may not be familiar with the term micro-sleep, you probably understand what it means to be “out of it” or “zoned out.”

In the transportation industry, this is commonly referred to as highway hypnosis.

While you’re driving, your eyes are open, but you’re actually not awake. Micro-sleep is an episode of actual sleep that can last from a fraction of a second up to thirty seconds.


It typically occurs on a long road trip. And it’s often brought on by sleep deprivation, mental fatigue, depression, sleep apnea, and other medical conditions.

Characteristics of Micro-Sleep

Micro-sleep can occur any time and without warning.

People who experience micro-sleep episodes typically remain unaware of it while it’s happening.

And afterwards, they think they’ve been awake the whole time or that they just temporarily lost focus.

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Effects of Micro-Sleep

Another factor that adds to the probability of experiencing micro-sleep is the *sameness* of the road trip.


- The endless center line on the road,
- One telephone poll after another,
- Farmland after farmland,
- Prairie after prairie.

... The hum of the engine, the hum of tires, and the hum of the wind.

This repetition produces a trance-like state. You *look*, but your brain doesn't *register* what's going on around you.

You drive on auto pilot for *miles*, but have *no* recollection of having consciously done so.

Your eyes are *open*, and you *seem* to be awake behind the wheel, but actually, you're *oblivious* to it all and unable to respond to outside information.

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Think Again

Before you conclude that micro-sleep sounds ridiculous – or that it just doesn't happen, think again! It happens much more often than people realize.

Early Warning Signs


Schneider National has developed a list of early warning signs to help you recognize when you're approaching a micro-sleep episode.

Here are some things to be on the lookout for:

- You begin to miss or grind gears.
- Your speed starts to vary.
- You start to experience more close calls.
- You find yourself turning up the volume on the radio.
- Or you can't seem to get comfortable in your seat.

These are just some indications of a micro-sleep episode. You may experience others not listed here.


If you notice any of these signs, it's time to get off the road and find a safe, legal place to park your truck and get some sleep.

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Micro-Sleep Countermeasures

Preventing micro-sleep is far more effective than dealing with it once it occurs. Schneider National has developed a list of things you can do to help prevent micro-sleep episodes from occurring.

- Eat light before going to bed.
- Avoid drinking alcohol before bed, since it leads to disrupted sleep.
- Take advantage of the 10-hour break to get enough sleep.
- Allow sufficient time to reach your destination, and leave home early and well rested.
- Stay hydrated. Consume plenty of water.
- Take breaks every 2-3 hours.
- Pull over at the nearest rest stop or service area and take a nap when you feel drowsy or less alert, and during the critical times of 2:00 and 5:00pm, and 2:00 and 6:00am.
- Limit your nap to 40 minutes, and allow at least 15 minutes after waking to fully recover before starting to drive.
- Do not attempt to drive without proper rest. No load is worth getting hurt over or hurting someone else.
- Limit your intake of caffeine. Although a stimulant, caffeine is only a short term fix. Short naps are more effective than coffee at restoring energy.

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Course Summary

Course Summary

During this course, we took an in-depth look at what distracted driving means. Once different types of distraction were identified, we explored examples frequently encountered while en route. We also examined the risks associated with—and the strategies for averting—common pitfalls.

Now, let's review some key takeaways worth remembering.

Anything that diverts your attention from navigating the vehicle and responding to critical events is considered distracted driving. So avoid using electronic devices, multitasking, and getting lost in thought—while driving.

Whether the distractions are inside or outside the truck, your willingness to be distracted affects how successful you are at overcoming their allure.

Safe, responsible driving is a choice - one that requires your full and undivided attention. ... It only takes a split second of your eyes being off the road to cause an accident. But the consequences ... can be devastating.

So be safe, good luck, and we'll see you down the road.