



Live Well, Work Well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by the insurance professionals at eESI

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DRIVER SAFETY: DISTRACTIONS

Distracted driving is driving while doing another activity that takes your attention away from the road, and can greatly increase the chance of a motor vehicle crash.

There are three main types of distraction:

- Visual: taking your eyes off the road
- Manual: taking your hands off the wheel
- Cognitive: taking your mind off of driving

By practicing safe driving techniques you can significantly reduce your chances of being involved in an auto accident.

Multitasking at the Wheel

While there is little you can do to control other people's driving, there is plenty you can do to reduce your own distractions. Do not engage in any of the following while driving:

- Touching up makeup or hair
- Talking with other passengers to the extent that you aren't watching the road
- Smoking
- Adjusting the radio or other audio devices
- Allowing your dog to sit on your lap
- Eating

Stay Off the Phone

Cellphones are the most common driver distraction, and cellphone use results in many accidents every year. Driving while talking on the phone is dangerous because you cannot adequately divide your attention between the road and your conversation. If you must talk on your phone

while driving, using a hands-free device will at least let you keep both hands on the wheel.

Even more dangerous than talking on the phone is texting. Texting while driving is comparable to drunk driving in terms of decreased reaction time and impairment. You should always refrain from texting, checking email, programming a mobile GPS device or using your phone in any way while driving. If necessary, silence or turn off your phone.

To combat the growing danger of phone use while driving, many states have enacted laws against texting and handheld cellphone use. Not only could you be endangering yourself and those around you, but phone use while driving could cost you a lot of money in fines.

Get Plenty of Rest

Driving any distance requires you to be physically and mentally well-rested. Fatigue plays a large role in motor vehicle accidents and can be a major element in driving distractions. If you become drowsy, pull off the road and take a short nap.

Know Where You Are Going

Before you set out for a new location, familiarize yourself with the route. If you need to check your map or call for directions along the way, pull over before doing so.

Don't Drink and Drive

Alcohol is the single greatest contributing factor to fatal motor vehicle accidents. Never drive while intoxicated. If you are going to an event that serves alcohol, know how you're getting home beforehand and act accordingly. If necessary, program the number for a taxicab service into your phone or call for an Uber. Be aware that some prescription medications may also have debilitating effects on your driving.

Practice Defensive Driving

In addition to avoiding distractions, you should give your full attention to driving defensively. This can help minimize the risk of an auto accident. It's important that you are aware of other drivers around you and make adjustments to your driving accordingly.

