

Distracted Driving: At What Cost? (Transit Version)

Leader's Guide

This Leader's Guide is designed to help you conduct a successful safety presentation. This Guide includes the following material:

Introduction: A brief description of the program and the topic it addresses.

Program Overview: Summarizes the program content. If the program outline is discussed before the video is presented, the entire program will be more meaningful and successful.

Preparing for and Conducting the Presentation: This information will help you prepare the training setting, help you relate the program to your specific work situation, and provide objectives for focusing your presentation.

How Distracted Are You? This simple questionnaire helps you rate how much of a distracted driver you are.

Review Questions and Answers: The quiz may be copied and given to participants to document how well they understood the information that was presented. Answers to the review questions are provided separately.

Discussion Ideas: A number of ideas are presented that can help encourage discussions related to distracted driving.

Introduction

Distractions have been a safety issue for drivers ever since cars first hit the road, but for a variety of reasons, we are now experiencing an explosion of driving distractions. For example, drivers have a wide variety of devices they can use while driving, such as telephones, radios and CD players.

Secondly, we often feel pressure to conduct other tasks while driving.

Finally, there seems to be a widespread attitude that it's okay to perform a variety of activities while driving. In fact, most of us are unaware of how often we are distracted from the most important task at hand – driving the vehicle safely. However, bus operators face a whole array of responsibilities and additional distractions that makes their time behind the wheel especially challenging.

Distracted Driving: At What Cost? (Transit Version) is designed to raise awareness about the dangers of driving distractions, while providing information and suggestions that will help bus operators control distractions and remain focused on their driving. There is another version of the video that is designed for drivers of passenger and utility vehicles.

Program Overview

Introduction

1. The program begins with a dramatic scene of a crash in which a car backing out of a driveway is broadsided by a van driving down the street.
2. Driving while distracted has become a growing problem, partly because of the large amount of distractions inside and outside our vehicles.
3. There appears to be a growing attitude that it's acceptable to try to carry out a variety of other tasks while we should be focused on driving.
4. Driver distraction is a factor in up to 25% - 50% of vehicle crashes.

It's Just a Few Seconds

1. Most distractions last for a few seconds at a time.
2. At 30mph, a vehicle travels 88 feet in two seconds. That's just over two bus lengths. If an operator is distracted for two seconds, they will travel 88 feet unaware of what's happening on the highway.
3. At 55mph, a vehicle travels 160 feet in two seconds. That's more than ½ the length of a football field, or the length of 4 buses.
4. When a driver is distracted, it's common for their vehicle to drift off the road or into other lanes of traffic.
5. When a driver is distracted they also lose valuable reaction time that is needed to avoid hazards.

What is a Distraction?

1. Some of the most common driving distractions seem harmless, such as looking at things outside the vehicle, talking on the radio, interacting with passengers, reaching for objects in the vehicle and eating or drinking. Distractions like this are dangerous because they take our eyes and our concentration off the road.
2. Operators may have their eyes on the road when talking on a cell phone or while deep in thought. But these activities can be dangerous distractions because they can take our mind off our driving.
3. Distractions can become more dangerous when operators experience more than one distraction at a time, when road and weather conditions are bad, or when driving while drowsy, or when preoccupied with problems at home.

Two Distracted Drivers are Involved in a Crash

Two police officers are questioning a man (Mark) and woman (Julie) to determine the cause of their crash. Both drivers blame the other for “going way too fast” and “not watching where they were going.” But through questioning by the police officers, the following events are revealed.

While driving the van, Mark grabs a clipboard to look at the paperwork, but he drops it on the floor. In his left hand he’s holding a cup of coffee while steering the van. He reaches for the clipboard on the floor, but spills coffee on his legs. Meanwhile Julie is backing out of a driveway just ahead. She’s talking on her cell phone and listening to the radio as she backs. A song is playing that she wants the person on the phone to hear. As she backs into the street, she holds the phone to the speaker and turns up the volume. Mark sees her too late and he crashes into the side of Julie’s car.

Most of us have probably experienced distractions similar to those that caused the crash, but we probably didn’t think much about them.

This crash could have been avoided if the two drivers had taken these steps: Mark should have finished his coffee and reviewed his paperwork before he started driving. And Julie should have made her phone call and adjusted her radio when she wasn’t driving.

For bus operators it’s important to avoid similar distractions. For example, know your route and check for any detours before leaving the terminal and make personal phone calls at the terminal.

Radio Procedures

The two-way radio aboard most buses is important for the safety and security of bus operators and passengers. Generally, it’s best not to use the radio when the bus is in motion, unless there is an emergency. Radio procedures can vary, so it’s important to follow the specific radio procedures of your transit agency.

Taking Control

1. A distraction is anything that takes our eyes off the road or our mind off our driving. Distractions may seem harmless, but they are dangerous, as the crash illustrated.
2. Many driving distractions are caused by our own actions. So we should avoid the activities that cause distractions.
3. Some driving distractions can’t be controlled, like things happening outside the vehicle, or passengers trying to get our attention. However, we should try to ignore these distractions and stay focused on our driving.
4. Sometimes a distraction inside the bus can’t be ignored, like rowdy kids or a fight. With rowdy kids, making an announcement can sometimes help. With a fight, there are other options, such as using your alarm system or stopping at a safe place and opening the doors.

5. Operators can also control distractions by adjusting the seat, mirrors and sign codes before leaving the terminal.
6. If you're going to drive an unfamiliar route, bring along a description of the route and the turns. Then, when you're at a bus stop you can check to see where your next turn is.

Interview

A young woman who was severely injured in a distracted driving crash talks about how the crash ended her plans and dreams. Her parents talk about her active life before the crash and the great potential she had.

Conclusion

To some degree, we are all guilty of letting ourselves get distracted while driving. But the next time you're driving and you're about to make a call on a cell phone or take a bite of burger or reach for something on the floor, ask yourself, "Is this the safest thing to be doing?" The most important thing to be doing when we're behind the wheel is to concentrate on driving. Your life, the lives of your passengers, and the lives of those we share the roads with depend on it.

Preparing for and Conducting the Presentation

- Before presenting the video, review each section of this Guide and view the video.
- Make sure the presentation area is quiet, has good lighting, unobstructed access and good climate control.
- Check the seating arrangement and the audiovisual equipment to ensure that all participants will be able to see and hear the program. If extension cords are to be used, secure them in such a way that they won't become a tripping hazard.
- Begin the meeting by welcoming the participants. Introduce yourself and give each person the opportunity to become acquainted if there are new people joining the training session.
- Make everyone aware of the importance your organization places on protecting employee's health and safety and how everyone must be an active member of the safety team.
- Explain that the primary purpose of ***Distracted Driving: At What Cost? (Transit Version)*** is to do the following things:
 - Increase awareness of driving distractions related to bus operation, including some that are so common we may not realize they're distractions.
 - Increase awareness of the potentially tragic consequences of driving while distracted.
 - Provide a course of action to prevent distractions and help keep our attention focused on driving the bus.
- Next, introduce the video and then play it without interruption.
- After the video is complete, you can tailor any discussion to your specific situations. You can refer to the ***Discussion Ideas*** section of this Guide for additional ideas. If you want to review the content of the program with participants you can refer to the ***Program Overview*** in this Guide.
- After the discussion, give a copy of the review questions included in this Guide to each participant and ask them to complete the questions.
- Maintain copies of an attendance record and each participant's quiz as written documentation of the training performed.
- Included is a questionnaire called ***How Distracted Are You?*** This simple series of questions allows each person to rate how distracted they are when behind the wheel and helps them identify behavior they can change in order to become safer drivers.

Discussion Ideas

In addition to discussion topics you may have planned, the following questions may be used to encourage discussions related to distracted driving.

1. Does anyone have any stories about bus mishaps that involved distractions?
2. What are some of the most common driving distractions that you experience or that you see other bus operators experiencing?
3. What are some of the most unusual driving distractions you have ever witnessed?
4. What kind of things do you look for to help identify other distracted drivers?
5. Describe some of the driving distractions that bus operators experience.
What can be done to control or eliminate these distractions?

How Distracted Are You?

How much of a distracted driver are *you*? You can get an idea by rating how often you perform the following actions while driving.

Using numbers from the Frequency Scale, fill in the Frequency Box following each distraction. Take the test twice, for when you're operating a bus and again for when you're driving off the job.

Frequency Scale:

Never: 0 Rarely: 1 Occasionally: 3 Frequently: 5

Distraction	Frequency
1. Reach to pick up objects from the floor	
2. Eat snacks, sandwiches or meals	
3. Read maps, newspapers, or other publications	
4. Talk on a mobile phone	
5. Drink beverages	
6. Perform grooming activities such as combing hair, shaving or applying makeup	
7. Use a computer or PDA	
8. Look at things outside the vehicle for more than 1 second at a time.	
9. Make adjustments on your radio or music system that cause you to take your eyes off the road	
10. Reach for objects in a briefcase, purse or satchel	
11. Spend time deep in thought about work, family or other issues	
12. Divert your attention to passengers behind you.	
<u>Total Score</u>	

Your Score

The lower your score, the less distracted you are. But remember, no matter how good a driver you are, even one distraction at the wrong moment can have tragic consequences. The higher the score, (60 is the maximum) the more distracted you are. It also means you have to work harder at staying focused on your driving.

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Review Questions

Name _____ Date _____

1. What percentage of crashes involves distracted drivers?
 - a. Less than 5%
 - b. Up to 90%
 - c. Up to 50%

2. At 30mph, how many feet does a vehicle travel in 2 seconds?
 - a. 88 feet
 - b. 22 feet
 - c. 160 feet

3. Which of the following are common driving distractions?
 - a. Looking at things outside the vehicle.
 - b. Interacting with passengers.
 - c. Reaching for objects in the vehicle.
 - d. All of the above.

4. Using a cell phone while driving will not cause distractions if you keep your eyes on the road.
 - a. True
 - b. False

5. When can driving distractions become more dangerous?
 - a. When you experience more than one distraction at a time.
 - b. When road or weather conditions are bad.
 - c. When preoccupied with problems at home.
 - d. All of the above.

6. Ordinary actions such as eating a sandwich or visiting with a passenger while driving are not distractions.
 - a. True
 - b. False

7. A driving distraction is any activity that takes our eyes off the road or our mind off our driving.
 - a. True
 - b. False

8. It is safest to use the two-way radio when the bus is stopped.
 - a. True
 - b. False

9. If you're going to drive an unfamiliar route, it's a good idea to bring a description of your route with you and review it occasionally at bus stops.
 - a. True
 - b. False

10. It is best to adjust mirrors, the seat and the sign codes before starting your route.
 - a. True
 - b. False

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Quiz Answers

1. c
2. a
3. d
4. b
5. d
6. b
7. a
8. a
9. a
10. a