

Safety FOCUSED

February 2016

9 Tips for Staying Focused on the Road

Distracted driving can impair your reaction time and awareness.

Avoid Heated Office Debates

Co-workers can get offended if you take conversations too far.

A monthly safety newsletter from

9 Tips for Staying Focused on the Road

Focusing on your mobile and other distractions while driving can lead to impairments such as a decreased awareness of surrounding traffic, a sense of tunnel vision and increased reaction times. These all have dangerous consequences.

Even worse, research suggests that distracted drivers underestimate the effect that distraction has on them, and do not perceive their reduced awareness or ability to spot hazards. Distracted drivers also tend to have difficulty controlling their speed and staying in their lane, which endangers other drivers and pedestrians.

While there is not much you can do to control how other people drive, limiting your own distractions can help you better react to any dangers you may encounter. Use the following tips to minimise distractions while driving:

1. Make sure that you are well-rested before you drive. If you feel fatigued or drowsy on the road, pull over immediately.
2. Do not use your mobile to call or send messages. If you absolutely need to talk to someone, pull over somewhere first.
3. Store any loose items that could roll around in the vehicle so that you aren't tempted to reach for them while driving.

4. Limit your conversations with any passengers and ask them to keep their voices down to help you concentrate.
5. Avoid looking at a map or other written directions while driving. Instead, use a voice-based sat nav that does not require you to look at a map, or pull into a car park to get your bearings.
6. Only adjust the radio or other music players when your vehicle is at a complete stop.
7. Do not eat or drink while driving.
8. Never try to touch up your appearance using the rear-view mirror. You should do this once you reach your destination.
9. Never use a mobile or hands-free device in heavy traffic, inclement weather or in work zones.

Here at , we value your safety on and off the road. Be a responsible driver, and make paying attention to the road and traffic around you your top priority.

According to Brake, the road safety charity, an estimated 22 per cent of crashes could be caused, at least in part, by driver distraction.



Avoid Heated Office Debates

Discussions are a part of every office environment, but things can quickly get out of hand if a sensitive topic arises or if a co-worker becomes offended. Informal chatter with your co-workers about a political comedy sketch could quickly escalate into a debate; and if you do not know when or how to walk away from a situation like this, it could negatively impact your reputation and career.

In order to respect your co-workers' opinions and to safeguard your reputation, you need to know how to stay calm and collected during conversations. Here are some simple ways to avoid heated office debates:

- Remember that you are always in control of your own actions.
- Be open to disagreements. Always respect the opinions of your co-workers, even if they do not share your views.
- Try to avoid topics in the news or popular media that your co-workers could consider sensitive. This includes political news, natural disasters, armed conflicts and more.

- Establish some limits for yourself before you get involved in a discussion. The stricter these limits are, the less likely a debate will arise.
- Avoid expressing your views on sensitive topics, even when you are asked to.
- Avoid making subtle or sarcastic remarks. These could be misinterpreted by your co-workers and negatively affect your working relationships.
- Be sure to immediately apologise to a co-worker if he or she seems offended by something you said.
- Talk to a manager or supervisor if a discussion with a co-worker becomes an issue.

These tips are not meant to quell any fun, informal conversations with your co-workers—they should merely serve as a reminder that not everyone thinks the way you do, and thus you should be conscious of the things you say in the workplace and how you say them.



Safety in NUMBERS 123

Common causes of distracted driving:



Texting



Talking to passengers



Eating and drinking



Fatigue



Sat Navs

Source: The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents

Real-life Case Study

Jane was recently hired as a personal trainer in a popular Birmingham gym. Before leaving one night, she overheard her gym co-workers discussing a political debate that had occurred the day before. Since she was still new, Jane decided to join the conversation in order to get to know her co-workers better.

Although the conversation went well at first, one of her co-workers took offence when Jane made a disparaging joke about one of the debaters. From there, the discussion escalated into a heated argument, and Jane eventually left the gym in anger.

The next day, Jane noticed that the other employees looked uncomfortable around her and avoided talking with her. Since she wanted to establish good working relationships, Jane decided to immediately approach her co-workers and apologise for her remarks.

After Jane apologised, her co-workers seemed much more comfortable around her. Since then, she has been careful not to bring up sensitive topics.