

Health & Safety



The Most Common Causes Of Distracted Driving

Why do car accidents happen? There are two very general, very broad causation categories. The first one and the one that leads to the vast majority of crashes is something experts call “driver error.” Obviously, driver error can mean any number of things, so that too is divided into categories.

Do you know what the biggest driver error category is by far? Distraction. In other words, accidents that happen because drivers are trying to multitask. Now, we’ve all done this when behind the wheel at one time or another. But it’s important that we start to recognize how dangerous this kind of behavior can be. Hundreds of thousands of people are injured every year in automobile accidents involving distracted drivers, and the numbers continue to rise. In the United States, an accident is believed to occur about every 1.25 minutes as a result of distracted driving.

What causes these distractions? Anything and everything from eating to spilling to (no joke) trying to read a book.

The most common causes of distracted driving:

Talking and texting. People who use their cell phones to talk or text while driving are by far the most common reason for distracted driving accidents. In fact, the National Safety Council estimates that 26% of all car crashes involve cell phones.

GPS. We’ve become dependent on GPS to get us from point A to point B while driving. For many, using it doesn’t even seem like a choice anymore – it’s just what you do. But setting up a GPS route while driving is just as dangerous as texting. And even simply taking your attention from the road to glance down at the directions can lead to disaster. If you are going to use GPS, make sure it is mounted where you can easily see it... then turn up the volume anyway so that you can listen to the directions instead of having to constantly look at the screen.

Adjusting music or controls. Maybe you’re roasting and you need to adjust the temperature. Or your child is yelling at you from the back seat to put on his music. Or the radio is just too darn loud. It may seem like a small thing to push a button or two, but it divides your attention – especially if you have to look away to do it. Small or not, it can be the difference between getting in an accident and having a smooth trip.

Applying makeup, or grooming in general. Sometimes you just don’t have time to look your best before you have to jump in the car. Unfortunately, many people seem to have decided that driving provides an opportunity to put on those finishing touches such as adding lipstick, combing their hair, using deodorant or shaving. Not surprisingly, these activities – which take your hands off the wheel and your eyes off the road – can easily lead to accidents.

Talking to passengers. If you have someone riding with you in the car, it’s only natural to talk to them. In fact, you probably feel kind of rude if you don’t. But you always have to remember that paying attention to the road comes first. Turning to look at a passenger may feel like the right thing to do in the conversation, but it’s one of the worst things you can do while driving.

Not looking at the road. Lots of other causes tend to involve this particular action, but it’s worth looking at it by itself as well, because there are a number of different reasons why someone might take their eyes off the road. Perhaps you’re lost and looking for a landmark or address. Or there’s an accident on the side of the road and you want to know what’s going on. Maybe a gorgeous rainbow appears after a thundershower and you gawk at it. None of these seem like obvious dangerous acts, but all of them make an accident more likely.

Handling children or pets. It’s not safe – for you or them – to drive with your pet loose in the vehicle, but that doesn’t stop quite a few people from doing it. Sadly, when pets move around your car or sit in your lap, they become distractions. And as all parents know, having children in a car can be at least as bad. They yell to get your attention. They complain that they need things. They fight. It’s all too easy to have your attention pulled from the road.

Zoning out. Have you ever daydreamed on a long commute or while driving a familiar route? It’s pretty common. You might have even been slightly surprised to find yourself pulling into your destination, not really remembering the specific actions you took to get there. Was the route busy? Did you hit red lights? You weren’t really paying attention. Driving on “autopilot” happens too much, and it can be dangerous.

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Ardaman & Associates, Inc.
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Inside this issue

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| The 5 Keys | 2 |
| Night Driving..... | 2 |
| Adjusting your mirrors..... | 3 |
| After a vehicle accident | 3 |
| Vehicle Use Policy..... | 3 |
| Hands Free Reminder | 3 |
| Driving in the rain | 4 |
| COVID 19 Reminder..... | 4 |
| Ardaman Update | 5 |
| Quiz | 6 |

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Safe Driving at Night

Driving home after work or at night can be risky, particularly if you are tired. People think that opening car windows or listening to the radio will keep them awake; however, studies show that these methods do not work. In fact, these actions should be a red flag that fatigue has set in, and you need to pull over immediately. If you are sleepy when your shift is over, try to take a nap before driving home. Remember, sleep can quickly overcome you.

Why is Night Driving So Dangerous?

One obvious answer is darkness. Ninety percent of a driver's reaction depends on vision, and vision is severely limited at night. Depth perception, color recognition, and peripheral vision are compromised after sundown. Older drivers have even greater difficulties seeing at night. A 50-year old driver may need twice as much light to see as a 30-year old.

Another factor adding danger to night driving is fatigue. Drowsiness makes driving more difficult by dulling concentration and slowing reaction time.

Follow These Steps To Arrive Home Safely from The National Safety Council:

- Keep headlights, tail lights, signal lights and windows (inside and out) clean.
- Have your headlights properly aimed. Mis-aimed headlights blind other drivers and reduce your ability to see the road.
- Eat strategically by having protein-rich food, which encourages alertness.
- Avoid smoking and driving as smoke's nicotine and carbon monoxide hamper night vision.
- Turn your headlights on so that others can see you.
- Reduce speed and increase your following distances.
- Don't overdrive your headlights. You should be able to stop inside the illuminated area. If you cannot, you are creating a blind crash area in front of your vehicle.
- When following another vehicle, keep your headlights on low beams so you do not blind the driver ahead of you.

Defensive Driving: The 5 Keys

Before Driving:

- ✓ Do the Safety Walk Around the Car.
- ✓ Adjust your Seat.
- ✓ Adjust Your Mirrors.
- ✓ Adjust Your Headrest.
- ✓ Adjust the steering wheel.
- ✓ Do your "Seatbelt Check!"
- ✓ Lock the doors.



Aim High In Steering

- Our eyes are designed to work for us at walking speeds.
- The average person has not adjusted visually and mentally to the higher speeds traveled in motor vehicles.
- Look ahead to where you will be at least 15 seconds from now.
- 15 second eye lead time provides advanced warning of pending danger and gives you an additional margin of safety.
- Use improved eye lead time for more efficient, economical driving.

Get The Big Picture

- While glancing ahead, don't forget the sides and rear. Consistently update your information.
- Eliminate vision barriers/blind spots by establishing proper following distance. Stay far enough behind other vehicles to obtain the visibility required to make your own decisions.
- Avoid distractions in your vehicle or your thinking. Recognize and avoid drivers who seem distracted.

Keep Your Eyes Moving

- Focusing on any object for too long disables your peripheral vision— your early warning system.
- Keep your eyes moving at least every two seconds.
- Check your mirrors every five to eight seconds.

Leave Yourself An Out

- Your safest location in traffic is where the fewest potential conflicts exist, such as the outside lane of a 6 lane roadway as an example.
- When possible, surround your vehicle with space.
- Choose the proper lane and adjust speed accordingly, to maintain the space cushion (at least 4 seconds with car in front).
- If you lose part of the cushion, work to keep at least the front and one side open.
- Avoid tailgaters. When one is present, the accident potential is high.

Make Sure They See You

- Detect the presence of potential danger early. Send your warnings as soon as you think they will be recognized—not too soon or too late.
- Get eye contact by using the warning devices on your vehicle. Examples would be using your horn or head lights to get the other drivers attention.
- Don't take eye contact for granted. Be sure your warnings are heeded.
- Eye contact may be insurance against the unexpected.
- Don't drive in another driver's "blind spot."

How to Use & Adjust Your Mirrors

Good visual search habits require proper positioning and use of mirrors located inside and outside a vehicle. Using the settings below, you can see what is directly behind your vehicle with the inside mirror, and you can see directly into spaces adjacent to each of the vehicle's rear corners by using the side mirrors. Mirrors are intended for detection and not for gathering detailed information. How can we avoid blind spots while driving?

The inside/rearview mirror

Adjust the inside/rearview mirror so you can see the entire rear window from the driver's seat. You should have to move only your eyes, not your head, when using this mirror. Drivers 6 feet tall or taller may find it helpful to reposition the mirror upside down, if possible. This usually raises the bottom edge of the mirror about 1 to 2 inches and can substantially reduce a major blind area to the front for tall drivers.

Side-view mirrors

To adjust the driver's side-view mirror, place your head against the left side window and set the mirror so you can just barely see the side of the car in the mirror's right side.

To adjust the passenger's side-view mirror, position your head so that it is just above the center console. Set the mirror so you can just barely see the side of the car in the left side of the mirror. If the vehicle is not equipped with remove mirror-adjustment controls, you may need assistance when properly positioning this mirror.

With these settings, you will have almost seamless visual contact around your vehicle, which can help you detect the presence of nearby drivers. For example, when being passed by a vehicle in the lane to your left, you will see it progress from the rearview mirror, to the left side mirror and then to your side vision.

Before driving with these updated mirror settings, see how they work while your vehicle is parked. For example, you can parallel park along a street, then see how passing vehicles move through your mirrors and peripheral vision. This can help you become oriented to the new settings before heading out into traffic.

Remember, even properly positioned mirrors cannot eliminate all blind spots. To reduce risk, make a final check to the sides before attempting any lateral moves.

What should I do after a vehicle accident?

An unexpected car accident can leave you feeling a bit scattered. That's why it's important to brush up on post-accident procedures now, when you're good and levelheaded. This 7-step guide can help make the moments after an accident less stressful — and the claims process a whole lot smoother.

1. Move to a safe area (if you can)

If it's safe to do so and you aren't seriously injured, move your car out of further harm's way, like to the shoulder of the road or a parking lot. If moving your car just isn't possible, flip on your hazards to warn other drivers that your vehicle isn't going anywhere any time soon.

2. Stop your vehicle and get out

Make sure your car is no longer moving, turn off the engine, shift into park, or set the hand brake if you drive a manual. Take a moment to catch your breath. Check to make sure it's safe to get out of your car before opening the door. If you have flares or similar road safety items, consider using them. Do not wander away from your vehicle as to avoid other motorists from striking you. Do not stand in between the affected vehicles as you may become injured if another motorist strikes one of the vehicles.

3. Check on others involved

Check on all the other parties involved, including drivers, passengers, and pedestrians, to make sure no one is hurt. Call 911 if anyone may be injured. Even a seemingly minor symptom like dizziness should be checked out by a health care professional.

4. Call the police to the scene and contact your supervisor

Even in minor accidents, a police accident report can prove invaluable when dealing with your car insurance company and other drivers. Cooperate fully, but avoid admitting fault or blaming others while at the scene. Let the police objectively judge events and determine who, if anyone, is at fault in the crash.

If the police can't make it to the scene (which is more likely if there are no injuries), you can file an accident report through your state's DMV. However, you must still call the police prior to leaving the scene as to ensure the event is documented via the phone call and a report number is created.

5. Gather info

Try to write down as much info as possible in the accident aftermath, including: Driver and passenger names, License plate numbers and vehicle identification number, Insurance info, Makes and models of all vehicles involved, Contact info for any eyewitnesses, Location of the accident, The name and badge number of any responding police officers.

6. Document the scene

If you have a smartphone with a camera, snap some photos of the accident scene and vehicle damage. They'll come in handy during the claim process. You can also take pictures of driver's licenses, registrations, and insurance cards to ensure all reports are legible.

7. File your insurance claim

Vehicle Use Policy

Company vehicles are intended to be used for company business only. Personal use is **strictly prohibited**, unless the Branch Manager or Senior Management grants prior permission. The use of a company vehicle is restricted to the assigned driver or other Ardaman qualified drivers. Employees who are assigned vehicles must keep usage records. The employee may be held personally responsible for all damages and losses that may occur as a result of an unauthorized driver/passenger in a company vehicle or unauthorized personal use of a company vehicle. Additionally, the employee may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Examples of prohibited use:

- Company vehicles may not be used during non-business hours, including holidays and the weekends, unless there is a work related reason.
- Running errands, shopping, visiting friends/family, going out to eat, etc....
- Use by non-business related drivers/passengers including family members and friends are not permitted under any circumstance. A branch manager cannot approve the use of a company vehicle by a non-employee.

Hands Free Reminder

Ardaman restricts the use of personal and business phones and other hand-held communication devices while driving, operating equipment or performing any activity where phone use can be a distraction. Unless devices can be operated with hands free accessories, employees may not place or accept a call while driving or operating equipment.

If a call must be placed or accepted without a hands-free device, drivers must stop and park the vehicle in a safe area. Texting while driving or operating equipment is strictly prohibited. Local regulations and/or client requirements may prohibit the use of cell phones under any circumstances or further restrict the use of cell phones while driving. In these cases, Ardaman personnel are to abide by the most restrictive guidance.

Please contact your branch vehicle administrator if hands free accessories are needed.

COVID-19 Reminder

Ardaman is committed to protecting the Health and Safety of all our employees. COVID 19 continues to be a local, state and national challenge. We must remain vigilant and prepared to protect our coworkers and our families.

Key Reminders:

- Face covering required to be worn if unable to maintain 6' distancing requirements to reduce risk of exposure.
- Face covering required in all common areas in the office and any area where social distancing cannot be maintained.
- 6' social distancing, if you are within 6' of another individual you must wear a face covering indoors or outdoors.
- Continue wash hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, avoid touching your face, use respiratory etiquette, avoid close contact with people who are sick, and use disinfectant wipes to cleaning common surface. Use hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol-based).
- Do not shake hands with others, and disinfect tools and equipment prior to use.
- Face coverings are required in vehicles at all times if 2 people are riding together and windows must be open for additional ventilation.
- No more than two individuals can ride together.
- Employees should check themselves daily for symptoms of any illness including respiratory illness (cough or shortness of breath) or fever before travelling to the job site or reporting to work each morning.
- **If an individual is feeling ill, or someone in your home is sick, DO NOT COME TO WORK OR TRAVEL!** Contact your supervisor along with the HR Director and Safety Director immediately by phone to report your health condition.

Driving Safely in the Rain

Be especially careful when the rain first starts. During the dry season, engine oil and grease from passing cars build up on roads and highways. The first rains are notorious for one thing, making the road incredibly slick as the water mixes with the motor fluid. This slick mixture reduces friction between tire and the asphalt, which is why drivers are advised to drive at a low speed. After a few hours of rainfall, the water will eventually wash away the greasy build-up.

Slow Down

The chances of getting involved in an accident while speeding increases on wet roads and that's because wet roads aren't as effective as a dry road at helping a car come to a halt. If the forecast predicts a wet day or it's the rainy season, always leave 15-20 minutes earlier than usual to give yourself additional travel time so you won't feel the need to hurry.

Increase Your Following Distance

Wet roads reduce friction between tire and asphalt, thereby making your vehicle take longer to come to a stop. Smith System has a normal 4 second following distance, however this will need to be increased allow enough time to identify and respond to road hazards while driving in wet weather.

Brake Earlier And Slower

If you practice safe driving habits, you will have little need to slam on the brakes and risk getting rear-ended. When you need to slow down or stop on wet roads, go easy on the brake pedal, smoothly and earlier than you normally would. This reduces your risk of skidding off the road or into the car ahead of you.

Turn Off Cruise Control

Driving with cruise control on wet roads could actually cause your vehicle to speed up and could hydroplane when raining, besides that, when you use cruise control, chances are you may not be as alert as you need to be.

Avoid Big "Puddles."

Since you have no way of knowing how deep a puddle is, it is best to drive around them or take a different route if necessary. The reason is that water and electrical systems don't get along and sometimes a seemingly shallow puddle may float your vehicle.

Turn On Your Wipers

Consider replacing your wipers at the beginning of the rainy season. Your wiper blades need to be in good condition to clear water from your screen or risk distorting your view and distracting you. Be liberal with the windscreen washer and avoid following large vehicles closely so you don't get obstructive

splash and spray on your windshield.

Turn On Your Headlights

A few raindrops can make your car less visible to oncoming vehicles, consider turning on your headlights to help them see you in time. However, do not use high beams when it is raining to reduce distractive diffusion the rain creates. Florida and Louisiana regulations requires their use when it is raining.

Keep An Eye Out For Pedestrians

Pedestrians taking shelter under a hoodie or umbrella during a rainstorm may have an obstructed view of the road, which means they could step into the road at the wrong time. When driving in the city or road with pedestrians, you need to be extra watchful.

Pullover When Things Get Bad

If you can barely make out the car ahead of you because of the rain, then you need to find a safe place – away from the road – and wait for the storm to subside. Better to arrive late than never.

Don't Brake If You Hydroplane

If your vehicle begins to hydroplane, don't panic and slam the brake or turn the steering wheel. This could worsen things and send you into a skid. Instead, slowly ease off the gas pedal and steer straight until your vehicle regains traction with the road. Tap the brake pedal slightly if you need brakes .

Exercise Extra Caution At Intersections

Engage the brakes slow and evenly as you approach intersections. Not every driver has the proper training to handle adverse driving conditions, so don't assume you know what the other driver wants to do, it is better to anticipate their movements.

Driving Through Water

Be very cautious where water has flooded onto the road. It is not advisable to drive through moving water if you cannot see the bottom of it.

Slowly drive through the water, if it rises above the bottom of your doors, attempting to drive through could cause electrical damage and leave you with a heavy repair bill or worse, water might get into the engine forcing you to replace it

What To Do If You Stall In Deep Water

Do not try forcing the vehicle to start, you might hydro-lock and ruin your engine if water gets into the cylinders. If you can, get someone to help you pull out the vehicle using a tow rope or strap.

Ardaman Update



Injury Incidents:

- Employee was lifting a wooden drying rack with samples in the CMT Lab. While lifting the awkward shaped rack from the cabinet, he lost his grip and the rack began to fall. He caught the rack and felt some tightness in his back. When lifting awkward or heavy items, always ask for assistance. This will help reduce the weight of the load and allow for better grip on the item. If you loose control during a lift, let the material fall do not try to catch it. First Aid Only.

Vehicle and Equipment Incidents:

- The Driller Helper was pouring water from a bucket into borehole during drilling activities. While pouring the water, the hose connection above to the main water feed came loose and the hose fell four feet and stuck the employee in the middle of the back. The two inch water hose came loose due to the missing cotter pins on the cam lock connection. The lever arms had been secured using a zip tie and the vibration of the rig allowed the zip tie to slide off and the arms released. Proper cotter pins were not used along with a whip check to prevent the hose from falling. Safety Alert to follow.
- Employee was driving through a recently cleared wooded area to access the proposed borehole location. While driving through a rutted section of the site, the vehicle struck a tree stump which was hidden amongst small brush. The stump punctured a hole in the lower cab and damaged the lower panel of the passenger door. When encountering job site areas with brush that may cause limited visibility of the ground surface, the preferred safe work practice is to have someone walk the specific areas prior to proceeding forward when possible.

Near Miss / Hazard Identification

Highlighted Near Miss/ Hazard Identifications from 20 reports received from the month of March

- Employee was driving to the office to inspect for damages after a rare snow and ice event. While traveling along the road he observed another vehicle traveling in the opposite direction lose control and began sliding into his travel lane. Our driver was traveling well below the posted speed limit and had increased his following distances. The extra precautions due to the environmental conditions allowed him to identify the hazard quickly, and provide additional space and time until the other driver regained control and safely moved the vehicle back over to their travel lane. This is a great example of the benefits of using the Smith System while driving.
- Employee was driving on a gypsum stack road. They encountered a thick layer of dry powdery gypsum material on the access road which created a white dust cloud. The cloud engulfed the vehicle and came into the open windows reducing visibility. Our driver checked the rearview mirror and then immediately stopped the vehicle and rolled up the windows and waited for the dust to clear. Great example of how to react to a situation when visibility is compromised on a job site.
- A contractor was pouring concrete on a job site. While backing up the concrete truck, the operator had left the chute extended out and another worker was struck in the head by the chute. Fortunately the worker was wearing a hard hat and no injury occurred. Always perform a safety walk around a vehicle before moving it. When moving equipment in congested areas where work personnel are present, always use a spotter. Always secure the concrete chute properly before moving.
- Drill crew was maneuvering to a borehole location on site. The helper was driving the support truck and trailer ahead of the drill rig. The Crew Chief checked his passenger side mirror and noticed it had been knocked in by a tree, so he glanced out the rear glass of the truck to assess the clearance on the sides of the rig. When he looked forward again, he realized the chase truck and trailer stopped ahead as the helper was referencing the site map. The Crew Chief applied the brakes and almost struck the trailer. Always remember to maintain a safe following distance even when traveling on job sites. Do not travel forward if equipment is out of place, stop where it is safe and then get out and reassess the area and equipment.

Ardaman Safety Audits

Identified Hazards from Loss Prevention Observation/ Safety Audits conducted in the month of February.

- **No behavior issues observed in February submittals. All personnel performing tasks safely.**

Ardaman Health and Safety Recognition Awards



This month, the Ardaman safety committee reviewed several submittals involving excavations, falls, driving, weather, PPE use, and equipment maintenance. Since we had so many proactive submittals we decided to continue to place all the submittals into a separate lottery pool this month and draw one winner at random for a \$25.00 gift card.

March Winner: Sofia Roman-Echevarria, Sarasota

A Safety Sticker was awarded to the following individuals:

- **Karen Cook** for recognition and actions regarding a potential fall hazard for employees working by an unguarded elevator pit. Employee notified affected personnel and the general contractor. She also received a gift card. (Orlando)
- **Megan Bourgeois** for recognition and actions regarding potential injury from exposure to an overhead hazard. Employee notified landlord of damaged light fixtures in office that were falling. (Baton Rouge)
- **Ken Brumley** for recognition and actions involving weather while driving. Employee recognized additional road conditions due to severe weather and decreased speeds and increased following distances. (Shreveport)
- **Evelio Horta Jr.** for actions involving debris that presented a struck by hazard to the client. Employee observed the client too close to the edge of the excavation and warned them to move back. Debris projectile flew towards the edge of the excavation. (Miami)

April 2021 Safety Quiz

Please circle the letter of the answer that fits best. Some answers can be found in the newsletter

1. Which of the following are considered causes of distraction while driving?

- A. Talking and Texting B. Adjusting music or controls C. Not looking at the road D. All the above

2. When a vehicle accident occurs, do not admit liability at the scene.

- A. False B. True

3. Hands free device usage while driving means distraction free.

- A. True B. False

4. When driving in the rain and a vehicle hydroplanes, you should apply the brakes immediately.

- A. True B. False

5. When driving at night, what precautions should be taken.

- A. Turn you headlights on B. Reduce Speed C. Increase following distance D. All the above

6. When possible you should surround your vehicle with space.

- A. True B. False

7. When driving your should look ___ seconds ahead of where you are?

- A. 10 seconds B. 20 seconds C. 15 seconds D. 0 seconds

8. Driver performance and driving behavior is an important aspect of how others view our company.

- A. True B. False

9. After reporting a vehicle accident to the authorities, you must exchange information with the other driver, take photos, and use the IR-C report located in your vehicle to collect and organize the information.

- A. True B. False

10. When traveling on roadways, a safe following distance in dry weather is?

- A. 2 seconds B. 5-8 seconds C. 4 seconds D. All the above

11. Before driving a vehicle each time, you must first _____.

- A. Perform a safety walk around the vehicle B. Select a favorite music station C. Adjust your mirrors
D. All the above

All Ardaman employees must complete the quiz and turn it into their H&S coordinator by the end of each month. For those individuals who cannot attend the monthly safety meeting, please complete the quiz and submit it to your supervisor for approval. All completed quizzes must be submitted at a designated location at each office. The supervisor only needs to sign the quiz if you are unable to attend the monthly safety meeting. Please provide a reason for your absence in the box below:

| | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|------|
| | | |
| Employee Print Name | Employee Sign Name | Date |
| | | |
| Supervisor Print Name | Supervisor Sign Name | Date |