Dangers of Distracted Driving

Distracted driving is a dangerous epidemic on America's roadways. It occurs any time you take your eyes off the road, your hands off the wheel, or your mind off your primary task of driving. Any non-driving activities you engage in are a potential distraction and endanger you, your passengers, other drivers and any bystanders. Avoiding distractions can help the drivers of your organization's vehicles avoid accidents.

Driving Distractions

There are many types of driving distractions, including:

- Eating and drinking
- Talking to passengers
- Grooming
- Drowsiness and daydreaming
- Reading, including maps
- Using a navigation system
- Watching a video
- Adjusting a radio, CD player, or MP3 player
- Texting
- Using a cell phone or smart phone

Cell Phones and Smart Phones

The use of cell phones and smart phones has the highest risk of all distractions because it involves all three types of driver distraction simultaneously: visual (taking your eyes off of the road), manual (taking your hands off the wheel), and cognitive (taking your mind off driving).

Drive Free from Distractions

Practicing safe, undistracted driving significantly reduces the chances of a crash or near-crash on the road. Driving already requires a person to multi-task, needing the mind and body to work together to operate the vehicle, and adding on other tasks will only greatly increase the chance of being involved in a dangerous situation. Driving should not be viewed as downtime or as time to catch up on phone calls, a meal or the day's latest headlines.

It is recommended that churches incorporate distracted driving policies into their overall transportation safety program. It is important to educate your staff and volunteer drivers on the dangers associated with distracted driving, particularly the use of cell phones. A strict, no-cell phone policy is strongly recommended while operating any motor vehicle.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) offers more information on distracted driving on their website https://www.nhtsa.gov/campaign/distracted-driving.

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