



Training Solutions, Delivered!

# **DISTRACTED DRIVING: AT WHAT COST?**

**(BUS OPERATOR VERSION)**

**Leader's Guide, Fact Sheet  
& Quiz**

**Item Number: 3283**

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*This easy-to-use Leader's Guide is provided to assist in conducting a successful presentation.*

## **PREPARING FOR THE MEETING**

Here are a few suggestions for using this program:

- a) Review the contents of the Fact Sheet that immediately follows this page to familiarize yourself with the program topic and the training points discussed in the program. The Fact Sheet also includes a list of Program Objectives that details the information that participants should learn from watching the program.
- b) If required by your organization, make an attendance record to be signed by each participant to document the training to be conducted.
- c) Prepare the area and equipment to be used for the training. Make sure the watching environment is comfortable and free from outside distractions. Also, ensure that participants can see and hear the TV screen or computer monitor without obstructions.
- d) Make copies of the Review Quiz included at the end of this Leader's Guide to be completed by participants at the conclusion of the presentation. Be aware that the page containing the answers to the quiz comes before the quiz itself, which is on the final page.

## **CONDUCTING THE PRESENTATION**

- a) Begin the meeting by welcoming the participants. Introduce yourself and give each person an opportunity to become acquainted if there are new people joining the training session.
- b) Introduce the program by its title and explain to participants what they are expected to learn as stated in the Program Objectives of the Fact Sheet.
- c) Play the program without interruption. Upon completion, lead discussions about your organization's specific policies regarding the subject matter. Make sure to note any unique hazards associated with the program's topic that participants may encounter while performing their job duties at your facility.
- d) Hand out copies of the review quiz to all of the participants and make sure each one completes it before concluding the training session.

# 3283 DISTRACTED DRIVING: AT WHAT COST? (BUS OPERATOR VERSION) FACT SHEET

**LENGTH: 16 MINUTES**

## **PROGRAM SYNOPSIS:**

Featuring bus operators in a variety of settings, this dramatic safety video illustrates the range of distractions faced by bus operators. It also provides steps transit agencies and operators can take to control distractions, such as unruly passengers, route changes and radio communications. The video features a dramatic two-vehicle crash involving two distracted drivers, as well as a powerful interview with a young woman whose life was profoundly changed by a distracted driving crash

## **PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:**

After watching the program, the participant should be able to explain the following:

- What are some of the distractions faced by bus drivers;
- Facts about the distance traveled while distracted;
- How to deal with distractions taking place inside the bus;
- Procedures to take before beginning a route;
- How distracted driving can lead to serious accidents.

## **INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT:**

### **WHY DISTRACTED DRIVING HAPPENS**

- Everyday crashes like this happen across the country with disturbing frequency. In a split second, lives can be changed forever.
- The human and economic toll from vehicle crashes is staggering so we have to ask this question: why do they happen?
- In many cases we know that the cause is some kind of driver error but what's becoming more apparent is that an alarming number of vehicle crashes involve drivers who were simply distracted.
- As bus operators, you're entrusted with the care of your passengers and the safety of those with whom you share the road. It's a big responsibility.
- Operators also face a variety of tasks while driving: paying close attention to the road, carefully monitoring the mirrors, making frequent starts and stops, anticipating the moves of other drivers and answering passenger questions.
- It's a job that requires a clear alert mind and a commitment to stay focused on driving, but as you know there are a whole host of things that can distract you.
- You've probably noticed that we're experiencing an explosion of driving distractions, partly because there are so many things to distract us, both inside and outside our vehicles.
- But perhaps most dangerous is the widespread attitude that it's OK to perform a variety of other activities while we're driving.
- This attitude seems so universal that most of us aren't aware how often we're distracted from the most important task at hand: driving the bus safely.

### **STATISTICS OF DISTRACTED DRIVING**

- Unfortunately, we're paying a high price for driving while distracted. In fact, the frequency of distracted driving crashes and their economic toll in the US is shocking.
- Consider these sobering figures. It's estimated that 25 to 50% of vehicle crashes involve distracted drivers.
- About 284,000 distracted drivers are involved in serious crashes each year.
- Driver distraction is a factor in 4 to 8000 crashes a day, or about the three to six crashes per minute.

- The economic toll of distracted driving crashes is estimated at forty to \$80 billion per year.

### **IT'S JUST A FEW SECONDS**

- Lots of distractions last only a few seconds but even a few seconds can make a huge difference when we're driving.
- For instance, at the relatively slow speed of 30 mph if you're distracted for two seconds, you'll travel 88 feet. That's about the length of six midsize vehicles or just over 2 bus lengths.
- A lot can happen in 88 feet if you're not focused on your driving and you sure don't have the big picture if you don't know what's happening in and around your bus.
- Now let's say you're cruising along at 55 miles an hour. Some passengers are having a loud discussion and you turn to them for two seconds to quiet them down.
- Two seconds isn't much time but at 55 mph, you just traveled over 160 feet, more than half the length of a football field or the length of four buses without any idea what's happening on the road. And during that time, the safety cushion you have from the 4 second following rule is cut in half.
- When we're distracted, it's also common for the vehicle to start drifting off the road or into another lane of traffic, creating a very hazardous situation.
- According to recent studies if you're driving while talking on a cellphone, even while using a headset, your eyes tend to focus on a short distance ahead and your peripheral vision decreases.
- You also tend to check your mirrors less often.
- We also lose valuable reaction time that we need to avoid hazards. The result can be tragic.

### **WHAT'S A DISTRACTION?**

- Some of the most common driving distractions seem almost harmless, like looking at things outside the vehicle, talking on the radio, interacting with passengers.
- Reaching for objects and eating or drinking: these distractions may seem harmless but they're dangerous because they take our eyes and our concentration off the road.
- If you're driving while talking on a cellphone or lost in thought, your eyes may be on the road, but you can still be dangerously distracted because your mind isn't thinking about driving.
- distractions can become even more hazardous when we experience more than one at a time, when road and weather conditions are poor, when we're drowsy or preoccupied with problems from home.
- There's no question that distracted driving is both dangerous and widespread in fact we often do things while driving that we don't even consider to be distracting.

### **ACCIDENT SCENE**

- Police officers interview the drivers of two vehicles. Mark, driving a white delivery van, has crashed into Julie, who backed out into the roadway without looking.
- If Mark and Julie had taken a few steps to eliminate their distractions, this crash could have been prevented.
- For instance, Mark could have controlled and eliminated his distractions by reviewing the information on his clipboard and having his coffee before he started driving.
- Julie could have eliminated her distractions by making her phone call and adjusting the radio when she wasn't driving.
- For Mark and Julie those simple steps of controlling the distractions could have made a big difference.

### **WAYS TO PREVENT DISTRACTIONS**

- For bus operators, it's important to prevent similar distractions. For example, know your route and check for any detours before leaving the garage and make personal phone calls at the terminal.
- Transit agencies are committed to the safety and security of bus operators and passengers.

- The two-way radio aboard most buses is an important part of that commitment. The radio helps the control center or dispatch call with important updates. The radio also allows operators to call the center or dispatch when there are problems or emergencies
- It's essential that you use the radio in a manner that doesn't distract from your driving. Generally, it's best not to use the radio when your bus is in motion, unless there's an emergency.
- Procedures for using the radio can vary so it's important to follow the radio procedures of your transit agency.
- If your bus is equipped with a mobile data terminal, avoid reading text messages until your bus is stopped.

## **TAKING CONTROL**

- So what can you and I do to control driving distractions? First, we need to keep in mind that a distraction is anything that takes our eyes off the road or our minds off our driving.
- We need to remember that distractions really are dangerous. Mark and Julie didn't think their activities were dangerous, but the crash proved them wrong.
- We also need to recognize that many driving distractions are caused by our own actions, so the best way to prevent this kind of distraction is to simply avoid these actions while driving. These activities are not only dangerous, they may be against transit policy.
- There are other distractions we can't control, like things happening outside our vehicle or passengers trying to get our attention.
- Although it's not always easy, we can choose to ignore them or just tune them out and stay focused on our driving.
- Sometimes distractions inside the bus can't be ignored, like a fight or kids being rowdy. With rowdy kids making an announcement can sometimes help.
- If there is a fight, here are some options. Call your Control Center, use the alarm system or stop at a safe location and open the doors.
- Another way operators can control distractions is by making adjustments before you drive away so you're comfortable and have a clear view of mirrors.
- Also change your sign codes at the terminal, not while you're driving.
- Driving in unfamiliar settings is another situation where it's important to control distractions. When you're going out on a new route, you can bring along a description of your route and the turns. Then while you're at a bus stop you can check to see where your next turn is.

## **INTERVIEW WITH TAMMI AND HER PARENTS**

- Tammi's mom: "Tammi was on her way home from work and she was on a cell phone. Tammi was a wonderful driver, but she was very distracted with her cell phone call."
- Tammi: "A truck hit my '88 Cutlass Caleigh. I was totally distracted by my cell phone. At the time, I was a yuppie little 18-year-old off to college, off to start my wonderful, wonderful life."
- Tammi: "I had my car accident and it tremendously set my life back horribly. I mean I went from an all-out All Star to a person in a coma in just the blink of an eye."
- Tammi's mom: "There's not a day that goes by that we don't think about Tammi and what could have been."
- Tammi's story shows us how quickly lives can be changed. Her story should be a reminder to us all of how important it is to keep our attention focused on our driving.

## **CONCLUSION**

- To some degree, we're probably all guilty of letting ourselves get distracted while driving, but the next time you're driving and about to make a call on your cell phone or take a bite out of that burger or reach for something on the floor, ask yourself: is this the safest thing to be doing?

- Remember, the most important thing you need to do when you're behind the wheel is to concentrate on driving.
- After all, your life, the lives of your passengers and the lives of those we share the road with depend on it.

## **DISTRACTED DRIVING: AT WHAT COST? (BUS OPERATOR VERSION)**

### **ANSWERS TO THE REVIEW QUIZ**

1. a

2. b

3. a

4. d

5. a

6. a

7. c

8. a

**DISTRACTED DRIVING: AT WHAT COST? (BUS OPERATOR VERSION)**  
**REVIEW QUIZ**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*The following questions are provided to determine how well you understand the information presented in this program.*

1. Operators face a variety of tasks while driving such as paying close attention to the road, carefully monitoring the mirrors, making frequent starts and stops, anticipating the moves of other drivers and answering passenger questions.
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
2. About \_\_\_\_\_ distracted drivers are involved in serious crashes each year.
  - a. 156,000
  - b. 284,000
  - c. 485,000
  
3. At the relatively slow speed of 30 mph if you're distracted for two seconds, you'll travel 88 feet.
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
4. According to recent studies if you're driving while talking on a cellphone, \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Your eyes tend to focus on a short distance ahead
  - b. You tend to check your mirrors less often
  - c. You lose valuable reaction time needed to avoid hazards
  - d. All of the above
  
5. Some of the most common driving distractions seem almost harmless, like looking at things outside the vehicle, talking on the radio or interacting with passengers.
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
6. Mark (the van driver) could have avoided his distractions by:
  - a. Not reaching down to get a clipboard while driving and drinking his coffee beforehand
  - b. Rolling down his side window
  - c. Only driving on the interstate
  
7. Julie (the car driver) could have avoided her distractions by:
  - a. Never speaking to her boyfriend on her cellphone
  - b. Waiting until someone else was home to drive her
  - c. Making her phone call and adjusting the radio when she wasn't driving
  
8. We need to recognize that many driving distractions are caused by our own actions, such as eating or making a cell phone call, so the best way to prevent this kind of distraction is to simply avoid these actions while driving.
  - a. True
  - b. False