

Defensive Driving: Protecting You from Distracted Drivers



Distracted driving has quickly become one of the most dangerous activities on the road for everyone. While you may be the type of driver that pays attention to the driving task, many of those around you are not. It is especially important that we are aware of the drivers around us and understand that our safety is not necessarily their priority.

Too many people suffer injuries and even die on roads and highways because drivers are not 100 % committed to keeping their eyes on the road. Protect yourself and your loved ones by learning the common signs of distracted driving that will help you spot drivers not paying attention to the road.

The data:

In 2021, the NHTSA estimated that 31,720 people died in motor vehicle traffic crashes from January through September of 2021, an increase of approximately 12% from 2020. Of these deaths, 3142 were the direct result of distracted driving.

What is a driving distraction?

Distracted driving is any activity that diverts attention from driving, including talking or texting on your phone, eating and drinking, talking to people in your vehicle, and engaging with the stereo, entertainment, or navigation system. Essentially anything that takes your attention away from the task of safe driving is a distraction.

You can avoid a car accident, specifically a distracted driver accident, and keep yourself and your passengers safe if you know how to spot these seven tell-tales of a distracted motorist on the road.

If you notice any of the following signs, it means the car near you could be operated by a distracted driver putting their, and your, life at risk:

1. Running red lights or ignoring traffic signs
2. Driving in and out of traffic lanes
3. Not using turn signals when turning or changing lanes
4. Paying attention to passengers or children in the car
5. Looking down or holding a phone up
6. Smoking, chewing, drinking, or eating
7. Bending or leaning down or to the right
8. Failing to maintain a consistent speed

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9. Hitting the brakes suddenly and frequently
10. Playing excessively loud music
11. Trying to locate a street address

Most car crashes caused by distracted drivers are preventable. Follow these safety tips to protect yourself against distracted motorists on the road:

- Practice defensive driving, which involves habits such as:
 - keeping a safe distance between vehicles (three seconds for passenger vehicles, dry road conditions)
 - checking side and rearview mirrors
 - anticipating the actions of other drivers on the road
 - driving below the posted speed limit
- Slow down or change lanes when you notice signs of distracted driving. Give these distracted drivers a wide berth.
- Install a dash camera to collect solid visual evidence to prove that the other driver involved in your crash was distracted

For additional information contact:

Alliant Risk Control Solution Center Toll Free Help Line: (888) 737-4752 or riskcontrol@alliant.com.