

Advice For Drivers**Avoiding distractions**

An initiative by:
 **Brake**
 the road safety charity

Driving is the most dangerous task many of us do on a daily basis, and requires full concentration. Many things can distract us while driving, but it is a driver's responsibility to avoid distractions and keep attention on the road.

Mobile phones

Drivers using mobile phones are four times more likely to crash. This is true of hands-free phones as well as hand-held phones. It is the distraction, not holding the phone, which is the main problem. Texting, emailing and browsing the web while driving are even more dangerous, taking your eyes *and* mind off the road.

When driving...

- ✓ put your phone on silent and out of reach or switched off
- ✓ set a voicemail explaining you are unavailable while driving
- ✓ or divert calls so they can be picked up by a colleague

Sat navs

Sat navs can be useful directional aids and reduce the stress of getting lost, but they can also be a distraction. There have been cases of drivers causing fatal crashes by looking at their sat nav instead of the road, or hitting low bridges by unthinkingly following sat nav directions.

When driving...

- ✓ leave plenty of time to set the route before setting off
- ✓ never fiddle with sat nav controls or attempt to re-programme your route
- ✓ keep your eyes on the road; listen to its instructions, but never look at a sat nav while driving
- ✓ keep an eye out for warning signs and diversions, and use common sense

Conversations with passengers

As well as conversations over the phone, conversations with passengers are distracting too.

When driving...

- ✓ keep conversations with passengers to a minimum, and quiet and calm
- ✓ ask passengers to respect the fact you're driving, and keep the noise down
- ✓ never have heated discussions or arguments while driving

Music

Loud music in a vehicle can cause slow reaction times and encourage aggressive driving. Tuning radio stations, changing CDs or scrolling through MP3 lists while driving also increases crash risk.

When driving...

- ✓ stick to quiet, calm music or radio
- ✓ tune in to the music or radio station you want to listen to before you set off

Smoking

Finding and lighting a cigarette while driving is distracting, and takes a driver's hands off the wheel. Once lit, smoke and ash from a cigarette can cause distraction as drivers squint to see through the smoke and reach to tap or brush ash away.

When driving...

- ✓ if you need a cigarette, take a break; don't light up at the wheel
- ✓ remember it is illegal in some countries, including the UK, to smoke in a vehicle used for work purposes

Eating and drinking

Drivers who eat or drink at the wheel are twice as likely to crash. Reaching for, or holding, a drink or snack while driving takes at least one hand off the wheel, giving you less control over the vehicle and less chance to react in an emergency.

When driving...

- ✓ don't grab food on the go – take regular breaks and have a proper meal or snack

Make a difference to road safety

Make the Brake Pledge

Everyone can make the Brake Pledge. It's a Pledge to do simple things to protect you and people around you, build happier communities, and help save the planet. Drivers pledge to follow six golden rules by driving:

- slow** – within speed limits
- sober** – free from alcohol and drugs
- sharp** – not tired, ill or with poor eyesight
- silent** – phone off and out of reach
- secure** – belted up in a safe vehicle
- sustainable** – only when you have to

Sign the Brake Pledge online at www.brake.org.uk/pledge to show your commitment to road safety.