



PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION REPORT

Issue 1/2015

Protective Insurance Company

THE DANGERS OF DISTRACTED DRIVING

*Distracted driving is one of the major causes of motor vehicle collisions today. According to Distraction.gov, in 2012 alone over 3,000 motorists lost their lives and another 421,000 were injured due to distracted driving collisions. **It's estimated that distracted driving increases chances of having an collision by up to three times.***

It's important for you and your drivers to understand the different types of distracted driving exposures as well as the proper skills to avoid distractions.

MANUAL DISTRACTIONS

These distractions occur when the hands and eyes are moved away from controlling the vehicle. They've become more prevalent due to advances in smart phone, tablet and dashboard technology. The single largest exposure with manual distractions is texting and driving. Most people think a quick glance at their phone is no big deal. They could not be more wrong. Too often, a short glance turns into a longer than expected stare and even a short glance is long enough to be involved in a collision.

If a driver looks down for five seconds to read a text message while traveling at 35 mph, the driver will have traveled over 250 feet without their eyes on the road. This is enough time to not notice traffic stopping, a pedestrian crossing the street or a curve ahead in the road. It's no different than driving for five seconds with your eyes closed.

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The best practice is for drivers to never have their phone within reach while driving. They should also silence their phone so they're not tempted to read an incoming message or answer a phone call. The only safe time to look at a device is when you are safely parked and off the roadway. Resist the temptation to look at or answer the phone. A study revealed that most cell phone calls and messages could have waited until later for a response.

Another manual distraction is eating or drinking while driving. It's extremely distracting, especially if the food is in a wrapper or container. It's important for drivers to refrain from eating and drinking while the vehicle is in motion. Also, any time food or a drink is spilled, especially on the driver, their focus is now diverted from driving to correcting or limiting the spill. Equally distracting is reading a map or adjusting a GPS while en route. Drivers should read these items and plan their trip before starting.

AUDITORY DISTRACTIONS

These occur when sounds have caused the driver to lose focus on the road, such as outside noises, rowdy passengers, a tour leader using a loud speaker, passengers talking to the driver or movies playing too loudly over the A/V system. If rowdy passengers are preventing a driver from being able to safely concentrate on driving, they should pull over in a safe area off the highway or road, turn on their four-way flashers and attempt to address the situation in a calm and collected manner. The incident should be reported to dispatch and, if it escalates, local authorities.

Drivers may also have a tour guide or group leader on the bus. They should ask them to make any announcements or give directions to the group before the bus leaves or when the bus arrives at the destination. Drivers should also refrain from carrying on conversations with passengers. Their focus should be on getting the passengers to their destination safely.

VISUAL DISTRACTIONS

These occur when an incident affects a driver's vision or takes their eyes off the road completely. Reading billboards, road signs, looking at attractions and sun glare are just a few. Glare from the sun can affect a driver's vision of the road and vehicles around them. They should make sure their visors are correctly adjusted and wear sunglasses to reduce glare. Also, as part of the pre-trip inspection, they should clean their windshield, inside and out and make sure it's not cracked.

Rain, snow, fog and darkness can also obscure vision. Drivers should check their wipers before the trip to make sure they are working properly. They should drive according to the conditions, allowing for extra time if inclement weather is expected.

Finally, unsafe drivers on the road can be a visual distraction. Your drivers should keep their distance from others on the road who drive erratically, allow them to pass and do not under any circumstances speed up, block them or cause a confrontation.

COGNITIVE DISTRACTIONS

These are the most difficult to recognize and control. They occur when a driver's mind is not focused on driving, such as when they are fatigued, thinking about personal or work issues, battling health issues or talking on the phone.

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.....➔
3X MORE LIKELY
TO CRASH
WHILE EATING.

STOPPING SAFELY DURING AN EMERGENCY

Even if you take all the proper safety precautions stopping on the side of the road, especially on the highways and interstates, tragic collisions can occur. Sudden breakdowns or an emergency creates a serious driving hazard. Road shoulders should be used for emergency stopping only. The best choice is to continue to the next exit that has a safe and legal area to park if it is possible and safe to do so. Far too often, especially at night or when the other motorist is ill, fatigued or otherwise distracted, they may inadvertently follow your vehicle off the roadway not knowing you are stopping on the shoulder, putting you and your passengers in danger.



IF YOU MUST STOP ON THE ROADWAY OR SHOULDER, FOLLOW THESE SAFETY PRECAUTIONS AT A MINIMUM:

- 1)** Pick a point where your vehicle will be visible. The primary factor for determining a stopping location is the safety of your passengers, the safety of the other motorists and your safety. Before selecting your stopping location, scan the area ahead for at least the next mile. If there are challenges such as debris, bridges, construction, other stopped vehicles, curves in the road, hills, soft, slanted, uneven or narrow shoulders, proceed to a safer area if at all possible. Being visible and recognized as a stopped vehicle on the shoulder is critical to everyone's safety.
- 2)** Pick your stopping point so that you also have plenty of room in front of you free of any challenges. You will need space to build a safe, legal speed before you merge back onto the roadway.

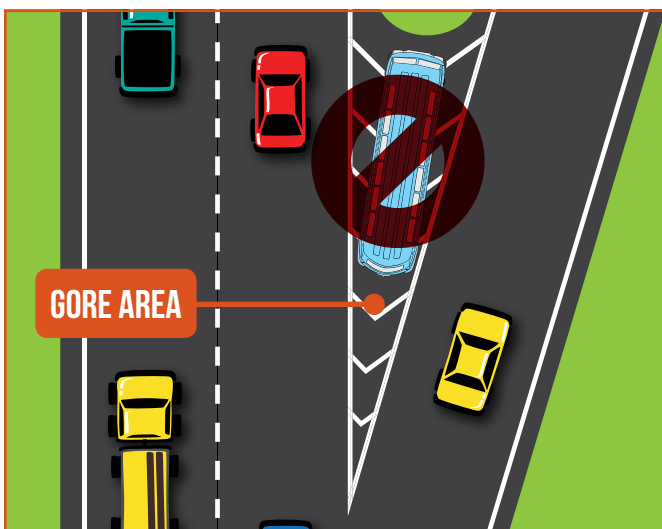
- 3)** Signal your intentions before, during and after you pull over.
- 4)** Pull your vehicle as far off the roadway as possible. Do not leave any part of your vehicle parked on the travel lane. However, to prevent potential rollover, do not pull onto grassy/dirt areas or other soft/dropping portions of the shoulder. Choose your spot wisely.
- 5)** Regardless if it is day or night, turn on your emergency 4-way flashers immediately.
- 6)** Place emergency warning devices around your vehicle as per company policy and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations 392.22.
- 7)** If you must walk around your vehicle, always wear brightly colored/fluorescent and reflective clothing so you may be seen.
- 8)** Constantly be aware of approaching traffic so you will not be struck.

9) Call for assistance.

10) If parked on the shoulder, make a determination as to what to do with your passengers. For example, is it safer for them to stay on the bus or in a safe area at an angle away and far in back of the bus? Remember, if you have to let passengers off the bus, it is sometimes difficult to keep them in a safe place because they may simply not understand the dangers. Call dispatch and/or the safety director for guidance.

11) If parked in a public area and passengers are permitted off the bus, remind them of what they need to do to keep from being hurt or struck by other vehicles.

12) Never park in the gore area of the roadway. The gore, gore point, or gore area/zone is the triangular piece of land found where roads merge or split. Gores on freeways are frequently marked with stripes or chevrons at both entrance and exit ramps. These stripes help drivers entering and exiting the freeway to estimate how much time they have to match the speed of the traffic flow they are entering. Driving in or through the gore area is a violation of traffic laws and is dangerous. The gore area is dangerous to stop/park in because there is typically high speed traffic driving on both sides, thus doubling the potential for a collision. Parking in the gore area is also dangerous to other drivers because your vehicle will greatly reduce their visibility of traffic they need to merge with.



BEFORE YOU TRY TO RE-ENTER THE TRAFFIC FLOW, PLEASE FOLLOW THESE SIMPLE LIFE SAVING STEPS:

1) Scan the area in front of you to observe any conditions that will prevent safe entry back onto the roadway such as other stopped vehicles, hills, debris, bridges, etc. before you reach minimum legal speed.

2) Before moving your vehicle, check your mirrors to make sure there is adequate space between you and approaching vehicles.

3) Continuously signal your intentions well in advance to alert other motorists.

4) Use the shoulder as an acceleration lane before entering the flow of traffic.

5) Depending on weather conditions, safely accelerate to the minimum legal speed for the road you are on and continue to build speed quickly and safely once in the travel lane. Count on the traffic you are merging with to be traveling at the posted speed limit. Entering the traffic lane too slowly can cause collisions, particularly if oncoming vehicles misjudge your speed and how fast they are gaining on you, especially when it's dark. If others are expected to brake or change lanes because you are going too slow, you may not have chosen the best option for merging.

6) Merge onto the travel lane leaving enough space between your vehicle and the others to prevent a collision.

7) Never pull immediately back into the travel lane from a dead stop. As with any lane change or merging maneuver, if you strike another vehicle, or are rear-ended by another vehicle as you reenter the travel lane, the collision will be deemed preventable on your part.

Even if you follow all safety precautions during an emergency roadside stop and a collision occurs, per many state laws, you can individually be held legally responsible.

ACCIDENT PREVENTION TECHNIQUES: TURNS & TAIL SWINGS



Turns can be dangerous and costly if drivers don't take the necessary precautions before and during these maneuvers. They are among the most common type of accident in the school bus and motor coach industry.

Most of these accidents are minor and usually involve something small such as a mailbox, mirror or stop sign. However, these accidents can also involve pedestrians and bicyclists, resulting in extensive bodily harm. For example, a right turn in a school bus on a tight residential street may only result in the right rear tire going over someone's sidewalk or lawn. But a left turn in a motor coach in a parking lot drop off situation could knock a pedestrian into a parked car, causing severe bodily injury.

Poorly adjusted mirrors, not knowing the dimensions of the bus, speed and proximity of fixed/moving objects can all contribute to this type of accident. So how can your drivers avoid turning accidents?

First, drivers should know the length and width of the vehicle.

Many school buses have a standard width of 8.5 feet and length of 40-45 feet while motor coaches have a standard width of 9 feet and length of 45 feet. They should follow company policy on pre-trip inspections and be sure to take note of the vehicle's dimensions, especially if they're assigned to a different vehicle than normal.

The rear axle of the bus acts as a pivot point for the rear of the vehicle. However, the distance between the rear axle and the rear of the bus is much greater than that of a passenger car. This part of the bus between the rear axle and rear of the bus is commonly referred to as the tail swing because it appears to swing around during a turning maneuver.

The tail swing can be 10 feet or more on a standard school bus and almost as much on a motor coach. Drivers too often focus the turn entirely on the side of the bus that is on the turning side. However, they need to focus attention on the rear corner of the bus that is opposite the turning side. Objects or people close to the rear of the bus can be struck as a result of the tail swing.

Drivers should make sure their mirrors are properly adjusted.

This will help them validate that the rear of their bus will adequately clear vehicles, pedestrians and objects when they begin the turn. Begin with the driver side mirror. If they can see the windows on the side of the bus, the mirror needs to be pushed out. Remember to check the right side of the bus when turning left and to check the left side of the bus when turning right. And they should always be certain they have the right of way before beginning the turn.

During the turn, it's necessary to ensure that the rear axle is past objects far enough to keep the bus from pinching them on the turn side once the bus begins to pivot into the turn. They should check their flat and convex mirrors on the turn side for space as the bus continues through the turn.

Re-check the mirrors for clearance in the event that a vehicle or person has entered the area where the tail swing has occurred. Once they have completed the turn, they should check their mirrors and straighten their front wheels before accelerating.

When turning from a single lane into a double lane, always turn into the far lane and make the transition to the desired lane well after the turn. When entering a double turn, always start the turn in the outside lane and stay in the outside lane to avoid a pinch by an outside vehicle. Prevent your vehicle from off-tracking into the other lane to prevent a collision.

Finally, it's important to ensure your drivers' pre-trip inspections include cleaning their windshields and side windows – inside and out – and mirrors. They should make sure mirrors and seats are properly adjusted and know the dimensions of their vehicle and tail swing.

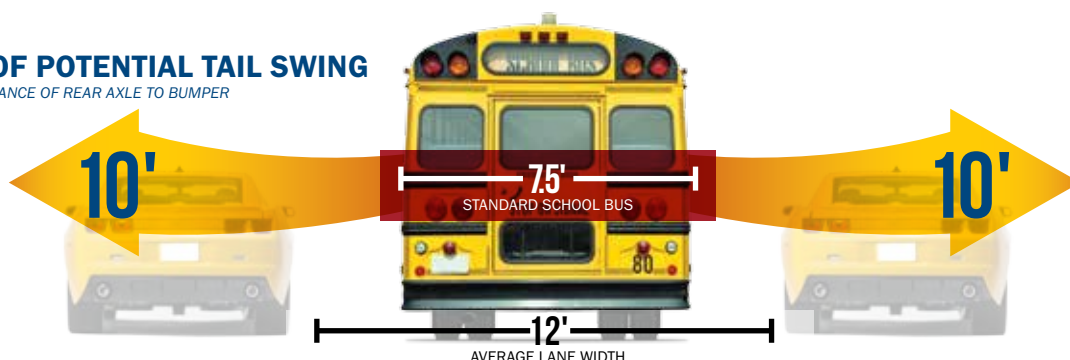
For more tips on avoiding turning accidents, watch Protective's "Safety Solutions: Turns and Tail Swings" video online at protectiveinsurance.com/safety-solutions. Request a DVD copy by contacting our Loss Prevention Department at 800-644-5501 ext. 7341 or lossprevention@protectiveinsurance.com.

WATCH NOW!
Scan with your mobile device.



AMOUNT OF POTENTIAL TAIL SWING

DEPENDENT ON DISTANCE OF REAR AXLE TO BUMPER



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Most people don't realize that talking on the phone, even when using hands-free devices, is a major distraction to your brain. Drivers may have both hands on the wheel and eyes on the road but the conversation is taking their mind off the task of driving. It has been scientifically proven that our brains cannot multitask. It can only focus on one task at a time and must constantly switch back and forth. So people may "see" a hazard but not "recognize" it as a hazard.

Another example of cognitive distractions is the wandering mind. For example, personal issues at home might affect a driver's ability to focus on the road. Drivers should not get behind the wheel if they can't clearly focus on getting their passengers safely to their destination.

The most dangerous cognitive distraction, however, is fatigue and drowsiness. Although it's very important to get good rest and stay on a routine sleep schedule, fatigued driving takes into account more than just adequate rest and sleep. For example, drivers' health and physical fitness impact their energy levels and attentiveness. They should

get regular health screenings, eat well-rounded meals and exercise on a regular basis. Health conditions like sleep apnea should be treated and monitored closely.

The different types of distractions can occur one at a time. However, more often than not, most of them occur in combination with each other, which compounds distracted driving.

Distracted driving is a serious issue that should not be taken lightly. For more tips on limiting distractions, watch Protective's "Safety Solutions: Distracted Driving" video online at protectiveinsurance.com/safety-solutions. Request a DVD copy by contacting our Loss Prevention Department at 800-644-5501 ext. 7341 or lossprevention@protectiveinsurance.com.

WATCH NOW!
Scan with your
mobile device.

8X

 MORE LIKELY TO
CRASH WHILE USING
A MOBILE DEVICE