Curbing Transit Operator Distracted Driving

Training Program
2015 Edition
Developed in cooperation with the Florida Department of Transportation and the USDOT’s Transportation Safety Institute.

Produced by the University of South Florida’s Center for Urban Transportation Research

2015 Edition
Course Overview

• Teach public transportation employees about the dangers and consequences of driving while distracted.

• Learn agency’s rules and policies with regard to non-agency authorized wireless technologies.

• Learn state’s laws and regulations related to wireless technologies.
Course Objectives

- Define the term “distracted”
- Describe the risk of driving while distracted
- Identify tips for preventing distracted driving
- Interpret the regulations, laws and agency policies with regard to wireless devices
Each year approximately 32,000 people are killed in motor vehicle crashes and more than 2.4 million people are injured.

Motor vehicle crashes are the number one cause of death for people ages 1 to 35.

Almost 80% of crashes and 65% of near-crashes happen within 3 seconds of some form of driver distraction.
In 2013, 3,154 people were killed and approximately 424,000 people were injured due to distracted driving.

Nearly 20% of all distracted driving fatalities involved cell phones.

24,000 distracted driving crashes that resulted in injuries involved cell phones.
Multitasking
Truth About Multitasking

Everyone tries to multitask

There are two truths:

• People actually do not “multitask” well
• People do not accomplish both tasks with optimal focus and effectiveness
Multitasking is a Myth

• People do not perform two tasks at the same time.

• The brain handles tasks sequentially, switching between one to the other—performing only ONE TASK at a time.
Multitasking is a Myth

- Our brains can juggle tasks very rapidly, which leads us to erroneously believe that we are doing two things at the same time.
- The brain prioritizes some information for attention and possible action and filters out some of the information.
Multitasking Exercise

• The science of attention, multitasking and more.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vjG698U2Mvo
What is a Distraction?
Distracted Driving is any non-driving activity a person engages in that has the potential to distract him or her from the primary task of driving and increase the risk of crashing. (Source: www.distracteddriving.gov)
Three Types of Distracted Driving

1. **Visual** – Taking your eyes off the road

2. **Manual** – Taking your hands off the wheel

3. **Cognitive** – Taking your mind off what you are doing
Examples of Distracted Driving

- Eating/Drinking
- Texting
- Talking on a cell phone
- Talking to a passenger
- Reading
- Grooming
- Daydreaming
• Distracted driving is the number one killer of American teenagers.

• More than 80% of drivers admit to blatantly hazardous behavior  
  (Source: Nationwide Mutual Insurance Survey)

• Drivers on mobile phones are more “impaired” than drivers at .08 BAC  
  (Source: University of Utah Study)
69% of drivers in the United States between the ages of 18 – 64 report that they talk on their cell phones while driving, while 31% admit to texting while driving.

(Source: CDC, Injury Center)

Drivers who use cell phones are four times more likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves

(Source: NHTSA, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety)
• 23% of fatal crashes in 2011 involved reports of distracted driving

• 18% of injury crashes involved distracted driving

• 5 seconds is the average time your eyes are off the road while texting. At 55mph, that’s the length of a football field.

(Source: VTTI, 2009)
• In 2009, those drivers involved in fatal crashes were reportedly distracted.

• The 30 to 39-year-olds had the highest proportion of cell phone involvement.
These statistics are staggering.

It is our job as professional transit operators to “Ensure Safety”

DON’T BE A STATISTIC!
For light vehicles or cars:

- Dialing a cell phone makes the risk of a crash or near-crash event **2.8 times** higher than non-distracted driving;
- Talking or listening on a cell phone makes the risk of crash or near-crash event **1.3 times** higher than non-distracted driving; and
- Reaching for an object such as an electronic device makes the risk of crash or near-crash event **1.4 times** higher than non-distracted driving.
Risks Associated with Distractions

• For heavy vehicles or trucks:
  – Dialing a cell phone makes the risk of a crash or near-crash event **5.9 times** higher than non-distracted driving;
  – Talking or listening on a cell phone makes the risk of a crash or near-crash event **1.0 times** higher than non-distracted driving;
Risks Associated with Distractions

• For heavy vehicles or trucks (cont):
  – Using or reaching for an electronic device makes the risk of a crash or near-crash event 6.7 times higher than non-distracted driving; and
  – Text messaging makes the risk of a crash or near-crash event 23.2 times higher than non-distracted driving.
Bus Operator Distractions

- Radio
- MDT
- Passenger assistance
- Route maps
- Fareboxes
- GPS

(Source: APTA)

Managing our level of distraction is critically important!
Public Transportation Operators Who Have Driven While Distracted

- Missed stops
- Run red lights
- Weaved
- Missed fares
- Hit vehicles, street fixtures, and other fixed objects
- Hit, injured, and have killed pedestrians
The Public transportation industry has had a number of very serious accidents as a result of distracted driving.
Alexandria, VA

Driver was using a cell phone
Los Angeles, CA

Operator was text messaging

25 people killed and 102 injured
Boston, MA

Operator was texting

49 People Injured
April 2014

National Distracted Driving Enforcement and Advertising Campaign Event

Anthony Foxx
U.S. Transportation Secretary
“At DOT, we’ve come to understand that [the] combination of public awareness, strong laws, and tough law enforcement can make a difference changing dangerous driving habits.”

Anthony Foxx, USDOT Secretary
On Tuesday, the federal government formally barred truckers and bus drivers from sending text messages while behind the wheel, putting its imprimatur on a prohibition embraced by many large trucking and transportation companies.

"We want the drivers of big rigs and buses and those who share the roads with them to be safe," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. "This is an important safety step, and we will be taking more to eliminate the threat of distracted driving."
Transit Agency Policy Changes

RTA will fire bus and rapid transit drivers who call or text while behind the wheel
By Karen Farkas, The Plain Dealer
September 22, 2009, 8:30AM

RTA is instituting a zero-tolerance policy in regard to cell phone use by drivers.

CLEVELAND, Ohio — RTA bus and rapid transit drivers who call or text while behind the wheel will be fired.

The zero-tolerance policy was announced Monday and is expected to be adopted by the agency's board in the next few months.

The new policy comes after several high-profile incidents involving cell phone use by drivers.

11 CTA Employees Fired For Cell Phone Use
CTA Adopted A Zero Tolerance Policy This Year

Dec 10, 2009 8:09 am US/Central

Fired bus drivers returning to Metro

Two Metro bus drivers who were fired by the transit agency are returning to the job after an appeal.

New MBTA hire fired for cell phone use

More Coverage: Local News

BOSTON (FOX 25 / myfoxboston.com) - A man who beat out thousands of job applicants for a new MBTA bus driver position has been fired after a week for allegedly violating the agency's ban on cell phone use.

The man was hired by the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority through a 27,000-person job lottery conducted to fill 34 vacancies.

MBTA General Manager Richard Davey said Wednesday the new driver was seen using a cell phone at a training site. When a supervisor approached, the trainee allegedly snapped it shut and got on a bus.

New MBTA hire fired for cell phone use

More Coverage: Local News

The agency's policy requires the immediate firing of any driver caught using a cell phone while on duty. It mandates a 30-day suspension of anyone caught carrying a phone while working. New hires must sign a
Managing Distractions

Our ability as professional transit operators to manage the level of distraction while driving is critically important.

We must ensure safety first!
Managing Distractions

Personal Electronic Devices

Insert Agency Policy Here
Managing Distractions

Agency-Authorized or Required Equipment or Material Distractions

[Blank space to insert agency policy]

[Icons: Road Closed, Stop Sign, Wrong Way]
Passenger Distractions

• Avoid unnecessary communications. If conversation cannot be avoided, do so while maintaining focus on the safe operation of the vehicle.

• Anytime the conversation impacts safe driving, pull the vehicle off the road to finish the conversation.
Managing Distractions

Fitness for Duty and Fatigue Management

• Notify your agency if you believe you are not fit for duty due to fatigue, illness, medication, or other causes

• People with undiagnosed sleep disorders are at greater risk for accidents caused by fatigue

• Over-the-counter and prescribed medications may affect your ability to safely perform your job
Managing Distractions

Seasonal Increase in Roadway Activity

• Population increases in winter months
• Increasing the likelihood of additional distractions and delays in service
• Drivers may not be aware of state driving laws
Education and Enforcement

- In 2010, the FDOT, USDOT, and FTA developed this training program to educate public transportation employees about the dangers of distracted driving.

Show “Curbing Transit Operator Distracted Driving” video
http://www.distraction.gov/stats-research-laws/state-laws.html
Rule Chapter 14-90, Florida Administrative Code (FAC)

- Language addressing wireless communication devices
- Requirements for driver education program that addresses wireless communication devices and distracted driving
Wireless Communications Device

- An electronic or electrical device capable of remote communication.

- Examples include cell phones, personal digital assistants (PDAs) and portable computers (commonly called laptop computers).
Personal Wireless Communications Device

– An electronic or electrical device that was not provided by the bus transit system for business purposes.
Wireless Communication

- A wireless communication plan and procedure that provides for the safe operation of the bus transit vehicle and assures that:
  - The use of a personal wireless communication device is prohibited while the transit vehicle is in motion.
Wireless Communication (continued)

– All personal wireless communications devices are turned off with any earpieces removed from the operator’s ear while occupying the driver’s seat.
• A policy on the use of a wireless communications device issued to the operator by the bus transit system for business related purposes.

• Policies developed shall assure that:
  – Guidelines are developed that allow for the use of a wireless communications device in emergency situations.
Rule Chapter 14-90, FAC

- The use of a wireless communications device does not interfere with the operator’s safety related duties.
The Bus Transit System shall develop a driver educational training program on:

- the proper use of a wireless communications device issued to the operator by the Bus Transit System while in the performance of their safety related duties
- the hazards associated with driving and utilizing a wireless communications device
Our Agency’s Policy

Insert Agency Policy Here
Curbing Transit Operator Distracted Driving in Review

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