Curbing Transit Operator Distracted Driving Training Program
Developed in cooperation with the Florida Department of Transportation and the U.S.D.O.T’s Transportation Safety Institute.

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

• Teach public transportation employees about the dangers and consequences of driving 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
Introduction and Discussion

• Each year approximately 40,000 people are killed in motor vehicle crashes and more than 3 million people are injured.

• Motor vehicle crashes are the number one cause of deaths for people age 1 to 35

• Almost 80% of crashes and 65% of near-crashes happen within 3 seconds of some form of driver distraction
In 2009, 5,774 were killed and 448,000 people were injured due to distracted driving on our roads.

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.
- In reality, the brain is switching attention between tasks – performing only one at a time.
Multitasking Exercise

• The science of attention, multitasking and more.
• [http://www.sciencefriday.com/program/archives/201009172](http://www.sciencefriday.com/program/archives/201009172)
What is a Distraction?
Definition of Distracted Driving

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
- Texting
- Talking on a cell phone
- Talking to a passenger
- Reading
- Grooming
• 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)
Just the Facts

• An estimated 1 million people chat on their mobile or send text messages while driving

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

(Source: NHTSA, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety)
Just the Facts

• 16% of fatal crashes in 2009 involved reports of distracted driving
• 20% of injury crashes involved distracted driving
• 16% of all drivers younger than 20 involved in fatal crashes were reported to have been distracted while driving
Just the Facts

• 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.
Just the Facts

These statistics are staggering.

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

DON’T BE A STATISTIC!
Risks Associated with Distractions

For light vehicles or cars:

– Dialing a cell phone makes the risk of crash or near-crash event **2.8 times** higher as non-distracted driving;

– Talking or listening on a cell phone makes the risk of crash or near-crash event **1.3 times** higher as 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 crash or near-crash event **5.9 times** higher than non-distracted driving;
  – Talking or listening on a cell phone makes the risk of crash or near-crash event **1.0 times** higher than non-distracted driving;
Risks Associated with Distractions

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

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

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

- Missed stops
- Ran red lights
- Weaved
- Missed fares
- Hit street fixtures and other fixed objects
- Nearly missed hitting pedestrians and cars
The Transportation Industry

The Public transportation industry have 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
September 2009

U.S. Transportation Secretary, Ray LaHood
Distracted Driving Summit
“We must act now to stop distracted driving from becoming a deadly epidemic on our nation's roadways.”

Ray LaHood, USDOT Secretary
U.S. bans truckers, bus drivers from texting while driving

By Ashley Halsey III, Washington Post Staff Writer
Wednesday, January 27, 2010

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 drivers.

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- RTA bus and rapid transit or just carrying -- cell phones and other electronic devices operating a vehicle will be fired.
The zero-tolerance policy announced Monday is adopted this year by transit agencies in Chicago and Baltimore.
The Massachusetts Bay Area Transit Authority is requiring drivers to bring any personal devices aboard the buses.

BOSTON (FOX 25 / myfoxboston.com) - A man who beat out thousands of job applicants for work as an MBTA bus driver has been fired after less than 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 stopped it and got on a bus.

This is not the kind of conduct we tolerate with 20-year veterans, let alone 20-minute veterans," Davey said in an interview. "Possession usually merits a suspension, but this is clearly no way to begin a career, and we decided it was better to part ways."

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

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

Fired bus drivers returning to Metro
This post has been updated.
Two Metro bus drivers who were fired by the transit agency are returning to the job after an appeal.

Metro and the union are at odds over the decision. (Gerald Martineau/Post)

A Metro investigation faulted the agency's driving procedures.

The driver is on leave after a bizarre incident in which he was dressed as McGuffin the Batman, a Metrobus supervisor at the time that Simesman, Candace Smith, told the newspaper. "We feel strongly about the decision on Ronald Taylor. "We're not yet back on the job, and she who believes."
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

Insert Agency Policy Here
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.
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
Curbing Transit Operator Distracted Driving in Review

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Questions or Comments