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-crashed happen within 3 seconds of some form of driver distraction

Introduction and Discussion

• 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)

• 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)

• 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 (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

The Washington Post

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

**We must ensure safety first!**

- **Personal Electronic Devices**

- **Agency-Authorized or Required Equipment or Material Distractions**

**Insert Agency Policy Here**
Managing Distractions

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.

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

State of the Union

http://www.distraction.gov/content/get-the-facts/state-laws.html
Our Agency’s Policy

Insert Agency Policy Here

Curbing Transit Operator Distracted Driving in Review

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Questions or Comments