



## DISTRACTED DRIVING

Distracted driving occurs when a driver's attention is directed away from the roadway and operation of the vehicle.

Many people associate distracted driving with mobile phone usage and either talking or texting. While mobile phones and other electronic devices like GPS are common forms of in-car distractions, there are many other sources of driver distraction, including:

- People, both in the car and outside of the car;
- Tasks such as eating, grooming, smoking, or changing the radio, and;
- Events, like road work or construction.

Distracted drivers make more errors when driving and are less able to control their vehicle. For example:

- Weaving in their lane, or driving at irregular speeds;
- Not paying attention to what is happening around their vehicle, following too closely, and not noticing road signs and/or signals.

Drivers who are distracted are putting themselves and other road users at risk, and are more likely to be involved in preventable road crashes that can result in property damage, injuries, and fatalities.

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**Your brain is your vehicle's most important safety feature.**

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## **WHAT DOES DISTRACTION HAVE TO DO WITH SAFETY FEATURES?**

Distraction makes it more difficult for drivers to get the full benefit from vehicle safety features. This is because many features engage when they sense the driver and vehicle responding to an emergency situation.

While it's true that some new features have the ability to scan the roadway for threats such as lane departure or an imminent frontal collision, the vast majority of safety features available today rely on the driver's cues to indicate a potential problem.

These cues include a hard turn of the steering wheel and/or fast, panicked braking.

If drivers are distracted, these cues are delayed. This means that by the time safety features receive these important cues, they will have less time and space to work.

The best way to get the most benefit out of vehicle safety features is to pay full attention to the driving task and keep distractions to a minimum.

To find out more about human factors like distraction and how they relate to the performance of safety features, visit [brainonboard.ca](http://brainonboard.ca).

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