

INTERMODAL SAFETY BRIEFING

The Dangers of Distracted Driving

Distracted driving comes in a variety of forms including talking on the phone or texting while driving, reading a map or directions on a device, or eating or drinking while driving. For commercial drivers, distracted driving is also an issue even when the operator is completely focused on driving, because of the number of other motorists on the road who are driving while distracted. Data indicates that distracted driving increases the likelihood of being in a crash by six-fold.

Importance

Avoiding distracted driving and incidents caused by distracted driving is important for saving lives, reducing crashes and crash-related injuries, lowering motor carrier and owner/operator costs, and generally making roads safer. Many drivers believe that hands-free devices reduce their accident risk, but research is showing that isn't true. Driving and talking on the phone still requires the driver to multi-task, which the brain is not capable of doing. While the brain can quickly switch from one task to the next, there is still time when the driver is not focused on driving, increasing the possibility of an accident.

Stakeholders

This safety briefing is designed to assist all:

- **Drivers**
- **Motor Carriers**
- **Terminal Operators and Workers**
- **Insurance Companies**
- **Technology Companies**

Safety Tips

It is important for everyone involved to identify the root causes of distracted driving and address those factors, as well as the behavior itself. For example, one study showed that more than 50% of calls drivers take while on the road are initiated by family members. Being able to educate the driver and the driver's family to the risks involved can decrease the amount of risky behavior exhibited by drivers.

Professional drivers can't be responsible for the behavior of the motorists around them on the road, but they can increase their ability to detect and react to potentially hazardous situations by concentrating their full attention on driving. Situational awareness is important especially given that intermodal vehicles take longer and require more room to stop or avoid a hazard.