DISTRACTED DRIVING

DISTRACTED DRIVING comes in many forms, and there are a number of reasons for it. One definition of “distraction” is “an obstacle to concentration.” Regardless of the type of distraction or the reasons, it is a leading cause of motor vehicle accidents in the United States.

Texting and talking on mobile devices (phones) is the leading cause of DISTRACTED DRIVING. Other distractions include but are not limited to:

- using navigation systems in the vehicle
- using apps on mobile devices
- fatigue
- eating and drinking
- talking to and interacting with passengers
- adjusting the radio or music devices
- temperature setting in the vehicle
- reaching for items in the vehicle
- watching outside activities going on around the vehicle

There are three main types of distractions during driving:

1. visual—taking one’s eyes off the road
2. manual—taking one’s hands off the steering wheel
3. cognitive—taking one’s mind off what he or she is doing

When a person is behind the wheel and texting, all three of these distractions are taking place!

When planning for a trip or outing, include the following methods for eliminating distractions:

- Keep the mobile device (phone) out of sight by placing it in the glove box, back seat, or a backpack.
- Plan when to make calls and pull off the road to place the calls.
- Plan for meals and include stops for food.
- Plan to sleep and rest before beginning the drive.
- Pay full attention to the road and driving situations.
- Engage in conversations at a minimum.
- Have others adjust the music and temperature controls.

Because many state and local laws restrict and prohibit the use of phones and other mobile devices while driving, make sure to become familiar with the laws in local jurisdictions.

BE PREPARED. Distractions can, and will, happen all the time. Including plans to reduce or eliminate distractions while driving can make for a fun and safe trip or outing.