

5 Smart Ways to Prevent Distracted Driving

Your phone dings. It may be a social media message. An email. A text. But if you're behind the wheel, that ding could turn deadly.

Distracted driving doesn't just include texting or reading something on your phone. It includes anything that takes your eyes off the road, your hands off the wheel or your mind off of driving. In 2018, crashes involving distracted driving caused nearly 2,900 U.S. deaths and 400,000 injuries, says the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration \(NHTSA\)](#).

Here's a quick reminder of the [Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's](#) distracted driving regulations:

- Texting and hand-held cellphone use is prohibited while driving a commercial motor vehicle used in interstate commerce.
- Drivers may incur fines up to \$2,750.
- Repeat offenses can lead to disqualification or put a driver out of service for up to 120 days.
- Your employer could be fined up to \$11,000.

Simply put, distracted driving means no reaching, no holding, no dialing, no texting and no reading while driving.

Try these five tips to help avoid distraction:

1. Turn off all unnecessary devices. Put any personal smartphones or electronics away. Turn them off, or set them to silent or "do not disturb" mode while driving. Never pick up a smartphone by hand to call or text while driving a truck—even if you're at a stoplight. And while hands-free devices are legal, know that talking on the phone while driving still takes your mind off the road.



- 2. Plan ahead.** Make distracted driving prevention part of your pre-trip routine. Set your route in advance on a GPS device. Plan meals for before or after the trip if possible. Prepare all the music for your drive before you start your truck.
- 3. Don't multitask.** If you need to write a note to yourself, use a dispatching device, or do anything other than drive, pull over and stop the truck first.
- 4. Keep your eyes on the road.** Don't let eye-catching billboards, buildings, landscapes or even other people steal your attention away from the road. According to the NHTSA, taking your eyes off the road for just 5 seconds while traveling at 55 mph is the same as driving the entire length of a football field with your eyes closed.
- 5. Drive defensively.** Look out for other drivers. They may be driving while distracted and could cause a serious accident.