



# DRIVER SAFETY LETTER



## Distracted Driving

April 2023

In 2020, the last year for which statistics are available, distracted driving resulted in the loss of 3,142 lives.

April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month and is the perfect time to reinforce to the dangers of distracted driving and the rules and regulations being enforced by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. Eating, drinking, interacting with a navigational device, using your cell phone, reading maps, or any other activity that takes the focus off the road is considered distracted driving. Did you know:

- Your brain can miss seeing up to 50% of your driving environment when you talk on a cell phone?
- Drivers talking on cell phones had slower reaction times than drivers with a 0.08 blood alcohol content?

We all know the rules—Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) drivers are prohibited from texting or using hand-held mobile phones while operating their vehicles. Violations can result in fines or disqualifications and will impact a motor carrier's and driver's Safety Management System (SMS) results. The rules also restrict a CMV driver from reaching for or holding a mobile phone to conduct voice communication or dialing by pressing more than a single button. CMV drivers who use a mobile phone while driving can only operate a hands-free phone located in proximity. In short, the rule prohibits unsafely reaching for a device, holding a mobile phone, or pressing multiple buttons.

The rules impose sanctions for driver offenses, including civil penalties of up to \$2,750 and disqualification for multiple offenses. Motor carriers are also prohibited from requiring or allowing their drivers to text or use a mobile phone while driving and may be subject to civil penalties of up to \$11,000. Violations will impact SMS results.

So, what can you do? Before getting behind the wheel, remember the tips below.

- When driving your vehicle, prioritize safety and stay focused at all times.
- Texting takes your eyes, hands, and mind off the important job of driving safely. Avoid taking calls or texting while behind the wheel. It's best to store your phone out of sight to reduce the temptation.
- Having a cup or food in your hand while driving can take your focus off the road. If you need to eat or drink while driving, pull over to a safe location for a break.
- Set your navigation before leaving. Entering information on your GPS while driving is unsafe and can cause a distraction.
- Driving while tired can cause your eyes—and potentially your vehicle—to drift. Get adequate sleep before leaving for your destination to stay focused while driving.

---

*The NPTC Monthly Driver Safety Letter, jointly sponsored by NPTC and **Centerline Drivers**, is a Microsoft Word document that you can print out and post as is, if appropriate, or modify any way you wish to make it a better fit for your drivers, including adding your company logo. If you are already doing an in-house letter, you may find information here that you can cut and paste into your own letter. If you are interested in specific subjects, or have any comments/feedback, contact Tom Moore, CTP, at [tmoore@nptc.org](mailto:tmoore@nptc.org) or (703)838-8898.*