**Five Minutes for Safety**

**Distracted Driving**

**Objective:** To reinforce the dangers of distracted driving, provide a refresher on Minnesota law and review company/organization policy.

**Opening**

Distracted driving is a serious safety and health risk, not only to you but to others. We all think of cell phones as distractions, but there are many others. During daylight hours, an estimated 660,000 drivers are using cell phones. That’s enormous potential for deaths and injuries.

**Questions for leading the conversation**

**Question:** Using the phone or texting the most well-known driving distractions, but can you name some others? (Ask for ideas)

**Answer:**

* Adjusting vehicle controls and electronics including navigation and sound systems
* Other passengers, especially children
* Driving an unfamiliar vehicle or route
* Unsecured cargo
* Eating or reading
* Intense or emotional conversations
* Emotional state and/or serious personal problems
* Grooming

**Question:** How much time is involved when you send or read a text while driving? (Ask for ideas)

**Answer:** Sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for 5 seconds — at 55 mph, that's like driving the length of a football field with your eyes closed.

**Question:** Under Minnesota law what can you do with your cell phone while driving? (Ask for ideas)

**Answer:** The law allows a driver to use their cell phone to make calls, text, listen to music or podcasts and get directions, but only by voice commands or single-touch activation without holding the phone.

Remember, hands-free is not necessarily distraction-free.

**Messages and Facts**

Here are some ways to keep yourself and others on the road safe from the impact of distracted driving.

* Put your away phone, send callers to voicemail, pull off the road to call/text or go hands-free. It’s the law in most states!
* Know your vehicle. Pre-set the climate control, sound systems other and identify the location of signals, wipers and lights.
* Plan your route and leave a little earlier; you’ll get there safely and less stressed.
* Postpone complex or emotional conversations with passengers or callers until you arrive at your destination.
* Don't text or call your teen drivers when they may be behind the wheel.
* Secure kids, pets and cargo. Follow through with that threat to unruly children to stop the car but do it safely and legally!
* Scan the roadway continually for situations that could require you to take quick action.

**Company/organization policy review, if applicable**

**Closing reinforcement**

It seems like we’re now all very dependent on having and using our phones every minute of the day. But a minute taken to answer a text can be a life and death matter. Just consider the 3,142 people killed and the estimated additional 324,652 people injured nationwide in 2020 motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers. Six percent of all drivers involved in fatal crashes in 2020 were reported as distracted at the time of the crashes.

**Sources:** Minnesota Network of Employers for Traffic Safety

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration