Driver Distractions

Be alert – don’t get hurt

When was the last time you talked on your cell phone while driving or ate behind the wheel? If you are like most drivers on the road today, you are doing it regularly and putting yourself and others at risk.

The Dangers of Multi-Tasking at the Wheel

While there may be little you can do to control another person’s driving, there is plenty you can do to reduce your own driver distractions. To minimize your risks while driving, avoid:

• Talking on a cell phone
• Touching up makeup or hair in the rearview mirror
• Talking with other passengers
• Tending to smoking materials
• Adjusting the radio
• Allowing your dog to sit on your lap
• Eating
• Reading directions or looking at a map

While many drivers’ attention may be diverted as a result of multi-tasking behind the wheel, nothing tops the cell phone as a common driver distraction. Originally, cell phones were touted as aids in emergency situations – to call for road service or report a late arrival. Today, however, many drivers use their cell phones to turn their cars into mobile offices, to catch up with friends and loved ones, or simply to squeeze more “productive” time into their day.

Cell phone use is especially dangerous because drivers typically cannot divide their attention between the road and their conversation. If you must talk on your phone while driving, researchers say that hands-free cell phones might at least help you keep your hands on the wheel, but may still keep your mind from focusing on the road.

Defensive Driving

In addition to avoiding distractions, you’ll also want to give driving your full attention by driving defensively to minimize your risk of an auto accident. Driving defensively means you are aware of the drivers around you and make adjustments to your driving accordingly.

Behind the wheel...

If the best defense is offense, then the two best strategies to beat auto accidents due to driver distraction while driving are: [1] Avoid any activity that diverts your full attention from the road, and [2] Drive defensively.