



The Driver: Tips to Reduce Auto Accidents

In 2020, the United States and Canada had fewer vehicles on the road, but the decrease in miles driven did not correlate to fewer accidents. The National Safety Council (NSC) reports that even with an 11% decrease in miles driven, vehicle accident-related deaths in the U.S. rose 8.3%, which is attributed in part to an increase in risky driving behaviors such as non-restrained occupants (14%), speeding (17%) and alcohol-impaired crashes (14%)¹.

While the reason behind this increase is still unknown, it remains the responsibility of every driver to ensure their own safety and the safety of others.

Follow the Law

30 Seconds to Prep

Leverage Vehicle Systems

Store Your Smart Phone

Designate Responsibilities



Maintain appropriate speeds and follow lane markings and traffic signs and signals.

Excessive speeding and other risky driving behaviors may not only result in a traffic violation, but also increase your chances of being involved in an auto accident.

Do not bypass built-in vehicle safety systems such as seat-belt signals and brake alarms.

Do not get behind the wheel if you are under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Take 30 seconds to run through a list of possible distractions before you leave.

Set the radio to your favorite station and adjust the volume so you can hear outside noises such as sirens.

Make last-minute calls or text messages, then place your phone in an area where you will not be tempted to reach for it, such as the trunk or glove box.

Many newer vehicles have built-in safety features. Take a few seconds to verify that these systems are turned on.

Often, infotainment and telematics systems have monitors in place to alert others or emergency responders in the event of an incident.

Work with your employer or the provider of the telematics system equipped in the vehicle to improve your driver behaviors. You may not recognize late braking, but these systems will.

Cell phone use while driving is prohibited in many states and Canadian provinces.

Regardless of your state or local laws, put your phone down, even when stopped at lights.

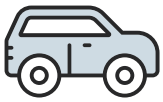
Use the Do Not Disturb function on your smart phone and opt for automatic responses while you drive.

Designate responsibilities when passengers are in the car.

Consider assigning the front passenger the duty of monitoring for navigation changes and environmental hazards.

Make sure all passengers are properly buckled and acknowledge that your role is to safely get everyone to the destination, not change the radio station, moderate conversations, make phone calls or adjust vehicle settings.

¹ <https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/motor-vehicle/overview/impact-of-recessions/>

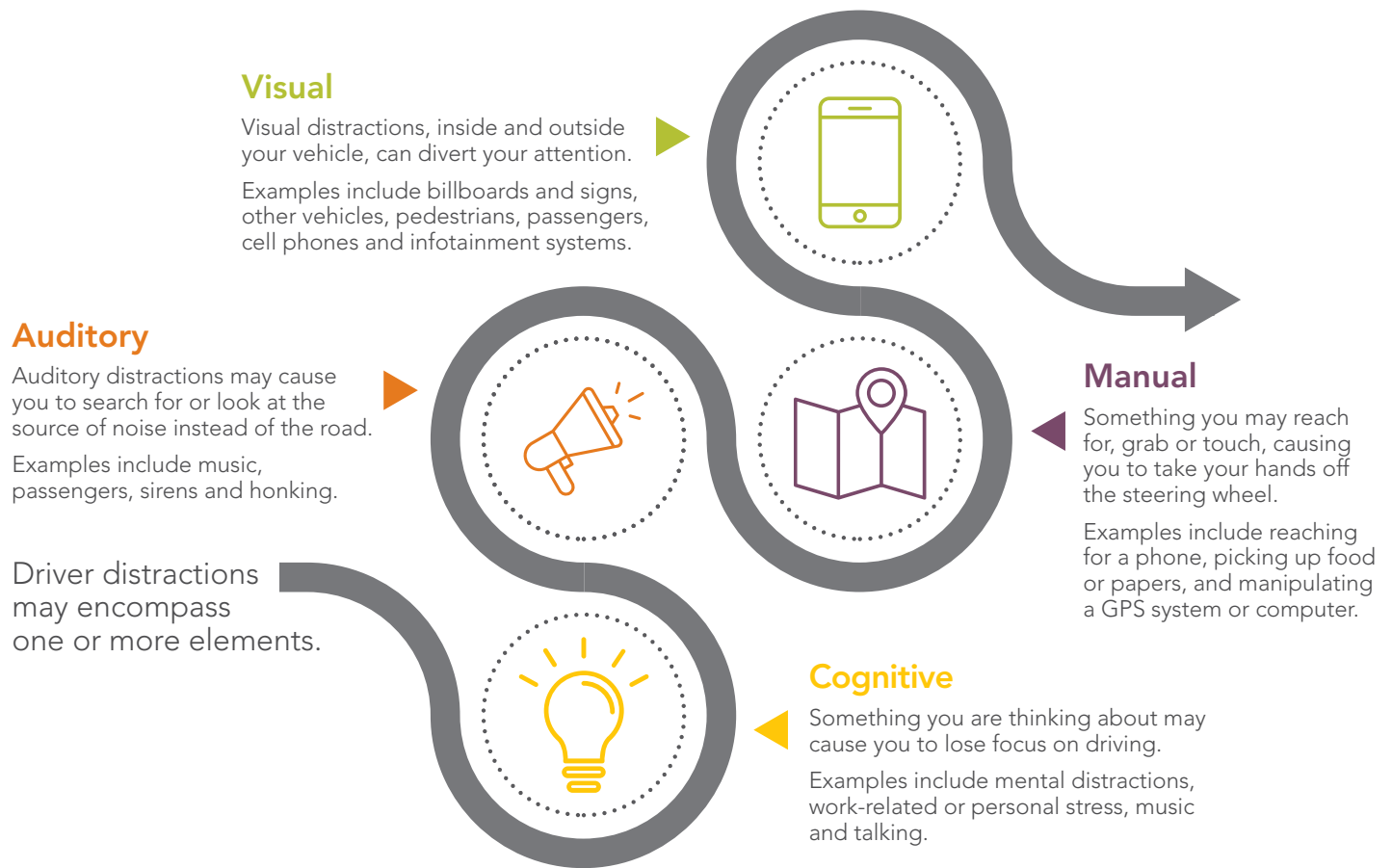


The Driver: Understanding Driver Distractions

In 2020, almost **3,000** fatal and **205,000** nonfatal distraction-related motor vehicle accidents occurred in the United States¹ and in some parts of Canada, surpassing those caused by impaired driving.²

As a commercial motor vehicle driver, you are³:

- 6x more likely to be involved in a safety critical event when participating in hand-held browser activities
- Nearly 6x more likely to be involved in a safety critical event when reaching for an object
- Over 4x more likely to be involved in a safety critical event when you take your eyes off the road for longer than two seconds



¹ <https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/motor-vehicle/motor-vehicle-safety-issues/distracted-driving/>

² Traffic Injury Research Foundation, 2019: <https://tirf.ca/road-safety/distracted-driving/>

³ Safety critical events include crash, near-crash, crash-relevant conflict, or unintentional lane deviation events. According to recently published data from Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, studies show that particular distracting tasks have an increased likelihood for at-fault accidents to occur. To learn more, please reference: [Analysis of Naturalistic Driving Data to Assess Distraction and Drowsiness in Drivers of Commercial Motor Vehicles](#) (published August 2021)



The Driver: Situational Awareness While Driving

Situational awareness is recognizing where you are, where you are supposed to be, and whether anyone or anything around you is a threat to your safety. Situational awareness while driving is integral to ensuring that your actions and reactions can be completed in sufficient time to prevent an accident.

Consider these tips to improve your situational awareness while driving:

1

Keep your eyes moving.

Scan back and forth across your field of vision and scan your mirrors. Actively scan traffic and environmental conditions. When you allow your eyes to remain fixed on any one thing, your peripheral vision begins to narrow into tunnel vision, resulting in a decreased ability to detect movement.

2

Identify risk areas.

If you are approaching a busy intersection, study the vehicles turning and approaching from other streets. Search for moving and stationary objects as well as pedestrians who may be in or near the road.

3

Watch for subtle changes in other vehicles.

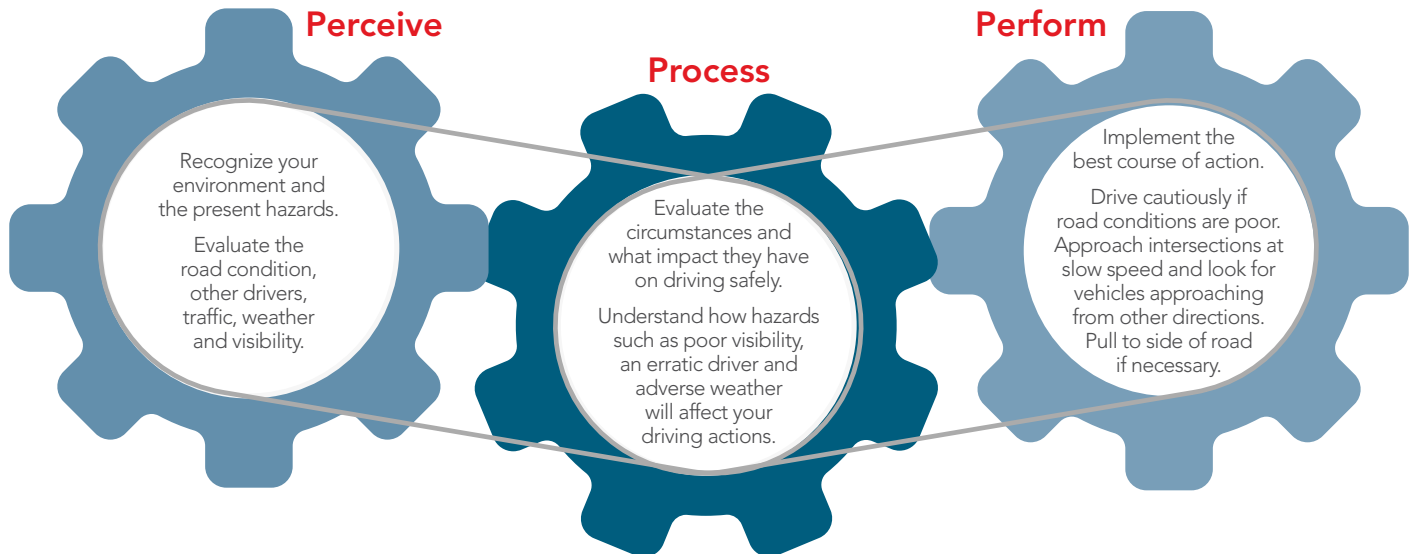
A drift in the lane or slight angling of the front wheels can indicate an impending lane change or that the driver is distracted. Be prepared to stop or navigate away from the distracted driver.

4

Focus your thoughts.

Mental and cognitive distractions prevent the full attention of your surroundings and environment. Limit mental distractions and focus on the task of driving.

Remember these Three P's to help ensure situational awareness.



¹ [Aeronautical Decision-Making: Federal Aviation Administration](#)

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