

## **ACCESSING SAFETY KNOWLEDGE (ASK) SHEET:**

### ***DISTRACTIONS ON THE ROAD KILL – DON'T BECOME A STATISTIC (PART 1)***

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, nearly 80% of all crashes and 65% of all near crashes involve some form of driver inattention for three seconds or more. Primary causes are: talking to a passenger, cell phone use, drowsiness, insect in a vehicle, and other forms of distractions, like changing a CD, looking at a map, and even applying make-up.

1. Professional drivers can take steps to prevent being distracted. Here are a few suggestions:
  - Get adequate sleep before any trip because fatigue can decrease attention and reaction time.
  - Don't drink alcohol before driving.
  - Avoid taking medication that causes drowsiness, either before the trip or while driving.
  - Pre-program radio stations.
  - Pre-load favorite CDs or set up your iPod.
  - Clear the vehicle of unnecessary objects.
  - Review and become familiar with all safety and usage features on any in-vehicle electronics.
  - Review maps and plan travel route or program your GPS device in advance.
  - Fasten safety belts before starting the vehicle.
  - Check that all passengers are wearing safety belts and that children are in an approved child passenger restraint system or safety belt.
  - Adjust all mirrors for best all-around visibility before starting the vehicle.
  - Don't read or write while driving.
  - Avoid smoking, eating, and drinking while driving.
  - Don't engage in stressful or emotional conversations with passengers in the vehicle.
  - Pull off the road in a safe place to deal with insects, unruly passengers, children, or pets.
  - Always keep cool when in stressful driving situations.
2. Thoughts on how to identify a distracted driver and to allow you to take steps to ensure your safety.
  - Beware of drivers who are drifting over the center line or out of their lane.
  - Watch out for drivers who are preoccupied with reading, eating, smoking, talking on a cell phone, etc.
  - Be cautious of drivers who appear to be involved in conversations with their passengers.
  - Never try to pass a driver who appears to be distracted.
  - Remember that the distracted driver may not be aware of the vehicles around them.
  - Give a distracted driver plenty of room and maintain a safe following distance.
  - Do not respond to another driver's erratic driving by driving aggressively or becoming angry.
  - Always wear your seat belt.

By learning how to manage everyday distractions, technological distractions, and other drivers who may be distracted, professional drivers become safer drivers.

Remember: To control distractions helps protect your life and the lives of others. This should not be an afterthought. You need to be pro-active in controlling the process. Think, and come home alive!

*Provided by the ASA – Houston Chapter Safety & Health Committee and* **ADAMS**  
INSURANCE SERVICE

P.O. Box 924943 • Houston, Texas 77292 • 281.679.1877 • [asahouston.org](http://asahouston.org) • [asa@asahouston.org](mailto:asa@asahouston.org)