

# DRIVING ADVISORY DISTRACTION

**Distracted driving isn't just about talking or texting on a phone (although these are very serious instances). There are hundreds of ways that drivers get distracted, and in doing so put themselves and other road users in danger.**

For example, you're four times more likely to have an accident if you are going through a divorce, while one in four drivers admit to being distracted when their kids are in the car. Everyday life has an impact on your driving, and your ability to concentrate.

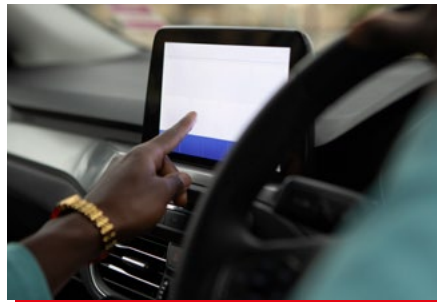
So what are the main causes of distraction, what are the effects, and how can you employ techniques to cope better? Evan Morris, Training and Development Manager, RED Corporate Driver Training, explains.



## Mobile phones

If you are holding and talking on a mobile phone while driving, not only is it illegal to do so, but it will increase your reaction times to events around you by 46%. Texting will increase times by 35%.

While talking hands-free might seem the safer option, the act of just speaking to somebody on the phone is not much safer. Reaction times increase by around 27%.



## Infotainment

Many vehicles now have infotainment screens to house music, phones, sat nav, settings, climate and other controls, but operating them can have a serious impact on the amount of time you concentrate on the road, and your reactions – and it doesn't matter whether it's touchscreen or voice control.

- Apple CarPlay (touch) **57%**
- Apple CarPlay (voice) **36%**
- Android Auto (touch) **53%**
- Android Auto (voice) **30%**

**Researchers found that drivers operating infotainment touchscreens took their eyes off the road for up to 16 seconds a time, while their stopping distances increased by up to five car lengths.**



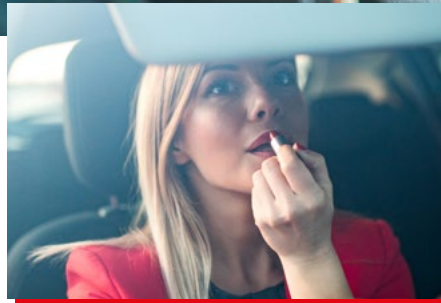
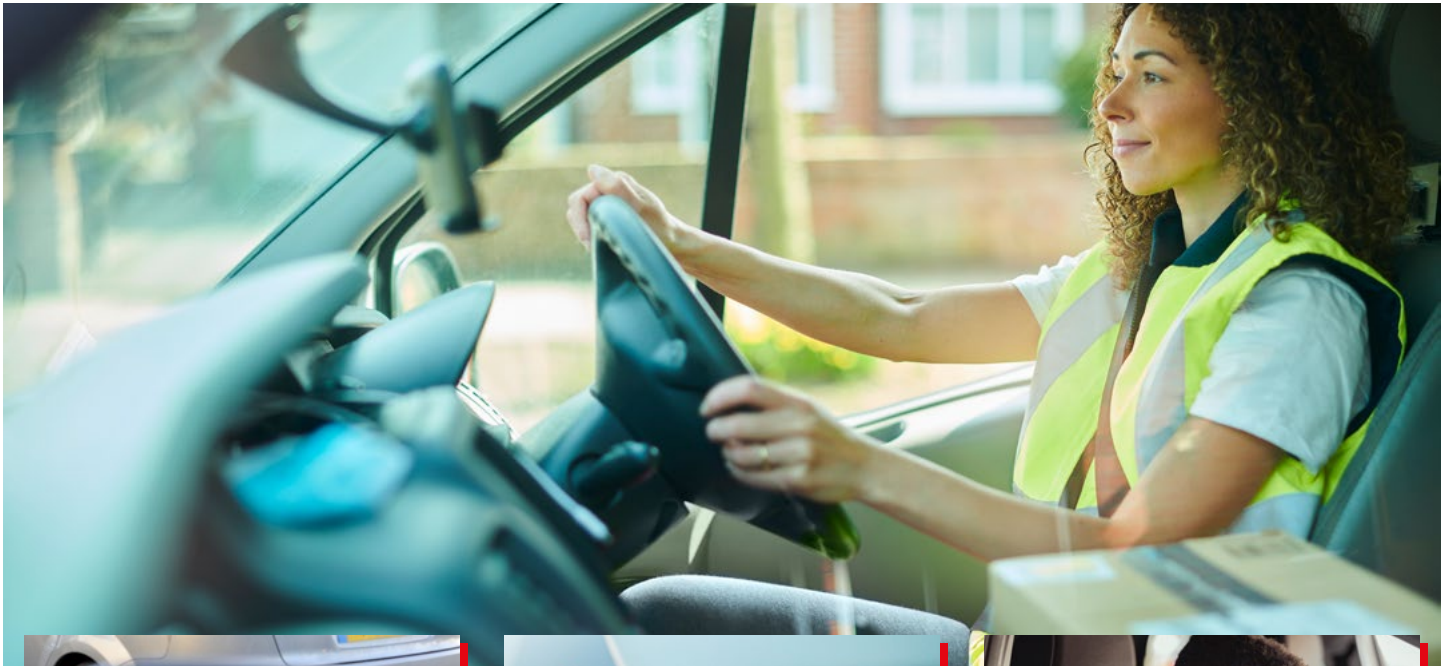
## Passengers

Two-thirds of drivers report a challenging interaction with passengers is 'seriously distracting' and research suggests a conversation with others in the vehicle reduces concentration on driving by the same levels as mobile phone use.

Limit conversations where possible, and if you do have to talk, perhaps it's not the time for deep discussions about life, money, politics or particle physics.

Don't be afraid to ask passengers to stop talking or distracting you. They are just as keen to not be in a crash too.

If you have children in the car, make sure they are strapped in well and have everything to hand for the journey. Assign the entire job of looking after them to other passengers, if they are there. If they need your attention, always pull over at a safe spot to deal with the issue.



**Other road users**

It's easy to get distracted by the actions of other road users - even long after the event some drivers can still be thinking and stressing about others' behaviour. Instead, focus on controlling what you can and being more accepting that you can't control everything, or everyone.

**Don't distract yourself**

**You're good looking enough...**

Research found that 8 out of 10 drivers admitted to personal grooming (applying make-up/combing hair etc) while driving. It's a huge distraction: quite simply, don't do it.

**Thinking time**

A journey can seem a great time to mentally set the world to rights, or daydream. But it can be incredibly distracting as you're not concentrating on the here and now. And spending driving time stressing about personal issues is dangerous, as the accident figures show for people going through divorce. Avoid this by focussing on the present.

**Talk to yourself**

Concentrate better by giving a running commentary of what's going on around you on the road. It helps your mind to avoid wandering.

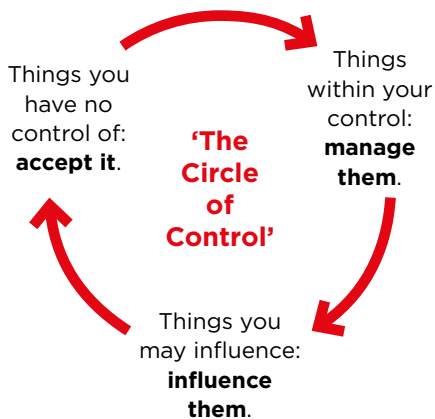
**Don't drive tired**

A tired mind and body leads to distraction: research suggests it can be as dangerous as drink-driving, with 10-20% of crashes linked to fatigue. Of course, getting good sleep helps, but also don't eat heavy meals before a journey, try and plan regular breaks and take micro naps if needed.

**Set your vehicle up before you leave**

Make sure infotainment, phones and the driving environment are set before you leave:

- Podcasts and music are downloaded
- Mobile is stowed and paired
- Sat nav destinations are programmed
- Seat and mirrors are properly adjusted before you start
- There are no loose items in the cabin



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