

# What is Distracted Driving?

The principal actions that cause distracted driving and lead to vehicle crashes are:

- Electronic device use (Cell Phone, GPS, Radio)
- The drivers state of mind
- Conversations with passengers
- Eating or snacking
- Reading or taking notes
- Applying makeup

The information below highlights additional distractions and suggestions on how to reduce the risks of distracted driving.

## ELECTRONIC DEVICES

There are many activities related to electronic devices that contribute to distracted driving. Activities such as texting, dialing or talking on the phone, entering information into navigation system, flipping through music on the radio or an MP3 player, are all very distracting while driving a vehicle. These may seem like simple tasks you could perform without issue any other time - but while driving they can be extremely dangerous. So wait until later to make that phone call, text or change the radio station.

## STATE OF MIND

Inattention to the road is not merely taking your hands off the wheel or fiddling with a device, but also not being fully aware of your actions while driving. This can be the result from having intense conversations, driving while upset, or just being overly tired. If you are driving with passengers, let them know that conversation should be kept to a minimum. Also, phone conversations should be avoided completely, even if you have a hands-free device. If you must make a phone call, then pull over and complete it at a safe location. If you are feeling angry or upset, then try to avoid driving distracted. The mind wanders far and wide when we are in these moods and it is hard to focus your attention on the road. Remember - a tired driver is a distracted driver. If you are having trouble keeping your eyes open or focusing your attention, find a safe place to stop your car and rest, or call a friend or family member to pick you up. It's not worth trying to drive while exhausted.

## EATING

Everyone needs to eat, however, eating in your vehicle keeps your attention on the food you consume and not the safe operation of the vehicle. And its not just the act of taking that bite from a sandwich that distracts you, its unwrapping and re-wrapping food, spilling, wiping, sipping from a cup, wrestling for a handful of chips. Take a few extra minutes to pull over, stop, rest, and enjoy your meal.

*Information Obtained from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, CA.gov and 21st Century Auto Insurance*

