

Fall 2011 Road Rules



Multi-tasking is a fact of life – we all face constant demands for our time, and we all have to juggle more now than ever before. Unfortunately, many people try to multi-task while driving, which is never a good idea. Distracted driving contributes to up to 8,000 crashes each day.

A 2010 [study](#) by Jason M. Watson and David L. Strayer of the University of Utah has reconfirmed that our brains are simply not wired to multi-task. Being distracted behind the wheel for even just a few seconds greatly increases your chance of a crash. For example, using a cellular phone while driving quadruples your risk of crashing. Eating, smoking, or adjusting music can be just as dangerous as texting, emailing, or talking on

a cell phone.

Passengers are one of the most frequently reported causes of distraction, with young children being four times more distracting than adults, and infants being eight times more distracting.

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety offers the following tips to minimize distractions while driving:

- Plan ahead so you're aware of directions and traffic conditions before you get on the road.
- Turn off your cell phone before you drive so you won't be tempted to use it while on the road. Pull over to a safe place before turning it back on.
- Prepare the kids safely buckled and situated with snacks and entertainment prior to driving. Make sure any pets are secured before driving. If children or pets need attention during the trip, make sure to pull off the road to a safe spot first.
- Eat meals and snacks before getting on the road, or stop to eat if you need a bite during your trip.
- Store loose gear and possessions to prevent rolling objects distracting you while you drive.
- Adjust seat positions, climate controls, sound systems, and other devices before you drive. Keep your windshield clean, and remove any dangling objects that may block your view.
- Brush your hair, shave, put on makeup, and tie your necktie before getting in the car or when you reach your destination.
- Stay focused on the road while driving.
- When you're on the road as a passenger or a pedestrian, take a look around and honestly evaluate whether you engage in poor driving behaviors that worry you when observed in other passengers or pedestrians.
- Consider improving your ability to respond quickly. AAA recommends practicing with DriveSharp, a computer program proven to improve reaction time and stopping distances.

Source: AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety