

FOCUS ON MINDFULNESS TO IMPROVE DRIVING

With the advent of more and more technologies competing for our attention, it is becoming more difficult for humans to sift through a swarm of distractions and focus on those items that are worth paying attention to.

For motor carriers, driver distractions and inattention are not new. Preaching to drivers to pay attention and focus on the road ahead is nothing new, yet preventable crashes still occur, leaving a motor carrier's management team members scratching their heads in frustration. One solution, and arguably the solution to the distracted driving problem, is simple mindfulness.

Mindfulness refers to one's ability to be in the moment and not only be aware of one's surroundings – including potential driving hazards – but also be alert enough to make the right decision to avoid the hazard before a loss occurs. From daydreaming and texting to gawking at a passing crash scene and losing focus on the vehicle in front of the truck, drivers have countless distractions competing for their attention. It is the mindful drivers, though, the ones who can drive millions of miles without a preventable crash, who can tune out what is non-essential and remain focused on what is important: driving.



Focusing on mindfulness is one way to demonstrate a commitment to safety. Here are some ways to help practice mindfulness and be in a state of moment-to-moment awareness.

PUT IN-CAB TECHNOLOGIES OUT OF SIGHT

Electronic logging devices (ELD), GPS units, satellite radios, and cell phones are essential devices for drivers but are also the most common in-cab distractions. Before the truck moves, drivers should start their ELDs, tune to their favorite radio stations and turn off their phones, and then put those devices out of sight.

CREATE A SCHEDULE FOR CHECKING MESSAGES

With the cell phone and ELD out of sight and silenced, drivers will be less tempted to check messages. Drivers should schedule a time to check messages, and dispatchers should not call drivers during known driving times.

MENTALLY PREPARE BEFORE STARTING

Before starting a trip, drivers should take a moment to get their heads in the right place and focus on the task at hand. There is too much at stake for a driver to take for granted the responsibility of operating a commercial vehicle safely.