

How to Avoid the Top Four Driving Distractions

Lisa Marshall, May 2016– Aussiewell.net

Distracted driving is a [growing problem](#) as we become accustomed to multitasking and constant availability of technology. While phones certainly make the list of driving distractions, turning off your phone is not the only solution. Below is an overview of the top driving distractions faced on the road today and how to avoid them.

Mobile Phones

Phones remain the top distraction on the roads. Even speaking on a hands-free phone increases your chance of a collision. [Laws](#) attempt to prevent using functions such as texting and emailing while driving but, of course, it is still fairly common to text and drive.

Set your phone to silent while you're driving. Make it

known amongst your social circle that you do not answer the phone while driving. If you are driving a long distance, periodically pull off to the side of the road (where legal) to check your phone. No call or message is worth a collision; always prioritize safety over instant gratification.



Passengers

Having a friend or spouse in the passenger seat is distracting enough as you chat and laugh together but nothing is more distracting than having children in the car. With older children, you can sit them down and explain the car rules such as avoiding arguments and yelling – at least until the end of the drive – and keeping their hands to themselves. Spats among children in the backseat are difficult to contain from the driver's seat. For longer trips, be sure to pack [activities](#) to keep them entertained.

When you have younger children, it may be best to take an adult passenger along to tend to the children's needs. Though passengers are distracting, a screaming baby is more so.

Eating and Drinking

Eating or drinking something on the road means you are likely driving one-handed. This may reduce your reaction time in the event of a collision. Furthermore, with the unpredictability of the roads and other drivers, you are likely to spill something on yourself, creating an even greater distraction.

You can even be [fined](#) for eating behind the wheel. While it can be tempting to eat on your drive to work in order to get to the office in a timely manner, it's safer to wake up a few minutes early and have breakfast at home.

External Distractions

Events such as accidents on the side of the road or distracting objects such as flashing billboards can be a huge cause of distracted driving. For distractions such as these, it takes time and practice to train yourself to ignore them. It may be a good first step to take a passenger with you who can tell you what is going on without your eyes leaving the road. Eventually, you will remain focused in the event of external distraction.

Distracted driving is an easy habit to fall into. The modern person is someone constantly on the go, usually multitasking, and consistently distracted. However when you get behind the wheel, it is important to remember that you can put aside your hectic life for the duration of your drive. Distracted driving does not affect only you. A collision can injure many people and has the potential to ruin lives. Stay safe and focused; put your coffee down, set your phone to silent, and keep your eyes on the road.

Lisa Marshall wanted to start [AussieWell.net](#) after meeting some of her long-distance online friends on a trip. Being from the States, they had a lot of "typical" questions about living in Australia, and so Lisa decided to provide a newcomer's guide--a go-to for any and all info on moving to or living in the country. Now that she invests a lot of time in her site, she continues to think about the safety, wellness, and overall lifestyle advice she can spread to Aussies and their visitors.

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