1. DRIVER DISTRACTION occurs when we divert our attention from the task of driving to focus on another activity such as texting, talking on a cell phone or eating. Are you vulnerable to the following distractions?
- Visual – taking your eyes off the road
- Manual – taking your hands off the wheel
- Cognitive – taking your mind off the road

2. DRIVER INATTENTION is the leading factor in 80% of motor vehicle crashes. Cell phone use is the most common distraction for drivers. The number of crashes caused by dialing a cell phone is almost equal to those caused by carrying on a cell phone conversation.

3. WHAT’S DISTRACTING YOU? … is it your GPS navigation system, a passenger talking in your ear, or are you trying to finish your lunch while driving? Drivers cannot predict when it is safe to look away from the road to multitask, because road conditions change too quickly. Drivers reduce their reaction time even if they look away for a few seconds.

4. BE WARY WHEN USING YOUR WIRELESS DEVICE… no difference exists in cognitive distraction (taking your mind off the road) between handheld and hands-free devices. Whether you are using a speaker phone or a Bluetooth headset you are not completely focused on driving.

5. DROWSY DRIVING… feeling sleepy is especially dangerous when you are on the road. Your awareness and reaction time is slower and judgment is impaired. Driving with less than seven hours of sleep has the same effect as driving with a blood alcohol level of 0.06. One out of three motor vehicle accidents can be attributed to driver fatigue.

6. YOUNG DRIVERS ARE ESPECIALLY AT RISK… inexperience drivers under 20 years of age have the highest proportion of distraction-related fatal crashes. Not surprisingly, they text more than any other age group and the numbers of young drivers who text is increasing. According to a 2009 survey 75% of American teens ages 12-17 now own a cell and 66% use their phones to send or receive text messages.

7. HAZARDS OF TEXTING… a university study of 18 to 20 year old drivers discovered that sending text messages while driving had a detrimental effect on a number of critical driving tasks such as maintaining your lane position and responding to traffic signs. In fact, drivers spent up to 400% more time with their eyes off the road when text messaging.

8. MULTITASKING WHILE DRIVING… visual inattention was the cause of 93% of all rear-end crashes according to a highway safety study. A driver’s crash risk increases when they multi-task. For example, reaching for an object raises your crash risk by nine times; looking at an external object by 3.7 times; applying makeup or reading by three times.

9. CAN YOU PUT 100% OF YOUR ATTENTION TO DRIVING?… while you may not be able to put 100% of your attention on driving, eliminating distractions will save lives and reduce costs associated with crashes. Because everyone is potentially affected when drivers are distracted, everyone must be part of the solution!