

Distracted Driving: Set Up Before Moving

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Why this matters

A work call, a changed address or a dropped item can compete with driving. The trip needs a plan that lets the driver leave those demands alone until safely parked. Supervisors and dispatchers are part of that plan.

Objective: Set up the trip and verify how work messages will be handled without distracting the driver.

Key hazards or failure points

Phone calls and messages; navigation changes; reaching for items; eating; demanding conversations; unfamiliar controls; pressure to respond immediately while driving.

Practical controls

- Before moving, set the destination, review the route and adjust the seat, mirrors and controls. Secure loose items and arrange necessary materials so they will not require attention while driving.
- Put the phone away and use the employer's approved notification-blocking arrangement. Avoid calls, including hands-free calls. Hands-free equipment does not remove the mental distraction of a conversation.
- Agree with the supervisor or dispatcher that responses wait until safely parked. Plan a safe stopping location for messages or route changes. Passengers should support the driver's attention.

Verify It in the Field

While legally and safely parked, the driver checks the destination and approved device settings. If the employer provides a blocking feature, verify its setup using the prescribed stationary check. Never test notifications while driving.

Check that loose items are secured and the phone/display arrangement does not interfere with vehicle controls or the view. The driver identifies where to stop if the route or work assignment changes.

The leader confirms that dispatch and job contacts understand the response plan. Record the trip briefing and any unresolved equipment or communication issue without collecting private phone content. A setting that silences one device does not establish that every source of distraction is controlled.

Stop and reassess

If a message, navigation problem, dropped item or conversation needs attention, continue controlling the vehicle and reach a safe legal parking location before addressing it. Do not stop in a travel lane to use a phone. Delay departure if required trip arrangements remain unresolved.

Ask the crew

1. What is most likely to demand attention on today's trip?
2. How have we checked the setup while parked?
3. What will dispatch do if the driver does not answer immediately?

Before moving: prepare the trip and make delayed replies acceptable.

Sources: NIOSH Distracted Driving at Work; NHTSA Distracted Driving guidance.

Free next step: [JHA/JSA planning & field-verification worksheet](#)

Expanded guidance, references, supervisor check and attendance record accompany this talk.