OBJECTIVES

- Increase awareness about cognitive distraction.
- Prompt changes in behavior.
- Promote safe and successful habits.
Distracted Driving... is it an epidemic? is it a pandemic?
DISTRACTED DRIVING FACTS

• Each day in the U.S., approximately 9 people are killed and more than 1,000 are injured in crashes that are reported to involve a distracted driver.
  National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

• In 2017, 3,166 people were killed in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers.
  National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)
DISTRACTED DRIVING FACTS

• Individuals who drive while sending or reading text messages are 23 times more likely to be involved in a car crash than drivers who do not text and drive.

(Virginia Tech Transportation Institute)
DISTRACTED DRIVING FACTS

• A crash typically happens within an average of **3 seconds** after a driver is distracted.  
  (U.S. Department of Transportation)

• **Five seconds** is the average time a driver’s eyes are off the road while texting. 
  The distance covered in **5 seconds** of driving at 55 mph is equivalent to the 
  length of a football field.  
  (Virginia Tech Transportation Institute)

• **Remember the video of rearend crash?**
What are the three main types?

- **Visual** – Looking at GPS devices, radios, etc.
- **Manual** – Eating/drinking, adjusting, reaching.
- **Cognitive** – Mental distractions such as phone calls.

- Texting is especially dangerous because it combines all three types of distraction.
Contrary to popular belief, the brain cannot multitask.

The brain switches, often rapidly, between two cognitive activities.

37% decrease in parietal lobe activation, which processes moving visual images.
Drivers talking on cell phones can fail to see up to 50% of the information in their driving environment.

- Dr. David Strayer, Director of the Center for the Prevention of Distracted Driving
COGNITIVE DISTRACTION

TEXTING

SOFTWARE PROBLEM

DRIVING
LASTING EFFECTS OF MENTAL DISTRACTION

MENTAL DISTRACTIONS CAN LAST UP TO 27 SECONDS after using voice commands on cars and phones to make a call, send a text or change the music.

Source: AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety
EXPOSURE TO RISK

- Crash scenarios include mix of business-related and personal scenarios:
  - Driving during work hours and outside of typical work hours.
  - Driving to or from work appointments and driving for personal reasons.
  - Employer-provided and employee-owned vehicles.
  - Employer-provided and employee-owned phones.
  - Hands-free and handheld devices.
  - Business and personal conversations.
CONSEQUENCES

• Significant liability with serious injuries and fatalities:
  ✓ Civil – Large awards / settlements when cell phones in use during collisions; insurers and employers.
  ✓ Criminal – Drivers sentenced for motor vehicle homicide; incarcerations seem to be ranging between 1 month and 10 years.
CONSEQUENCES – CONT.

➢ $24.7 MILLION – COMMERCIAL TRANSPORTATION COMPANY, 2008 CRASH IN MISSOURI

➢ $21.6 MILLION – TECHNOLOGY COMPANY, 2007 CRASH IN FLORIDA

➢ $21 MILLION – SOFT DRINK BEVERAGE COMPANY, 2010 CRASH IN TEXAS

➢ $8.7 MILLION – STATE OF ILLINOIS, 2007 CRASH IN ILLINOIS (State Trooper)

➢ $5.2 MILLION – PAPER COMPANY, 2007 CRASH IN GEORGIA

➢ $4.1 MILLION – ELECTRICAL CONTRACTING COMPANY, 2006 CRASH IN ILLINOIS

➢ $4 MILLION – PRINCE GEORGE’S COUNTY, 2009 CRASH IN MARYLAND (Police Officer)

➢ $2 MILLION+ – LAW FIRM, 2004 CRASH IN VIRGINIA

➢ $1.75 MILLION – CAR DEALERSHIP, 2007 CRASH IN FLORIDA

➢ $1.5 MILLION – STATE OF HAWAII, 2001 CRASH IN HAWAII (Teacher)

➢ $1.45 MILLION – CITY OF PALO ALTO, 2006 CRASH IN CALIFORNIA (City Worker)

➢ $1 MILLION – TRANSPORTATION COMPANY, 2013 CRASH IN OHIO
The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) banned commercial truck and bus drivers from texting while driving in September 2010.

Later, FMCSA banned all hand-held cell phone use by commercial drivers in November 2011.
CURRENT LAW

- State laws:
  - ✓ 47 states\(^1\) ban text messaging for all; all but 4 have primary enforcement.
  - ✓ 16 states\(^1\) ban hand-held cell phone use
  - ✓ No state bans all cell phone use for all drivers, but 38 states and D.C. ban all use by novice drivers, and 20 states and D.C. prohibit for school bus drivers.

\(^1\) Including D.C., Puerto Rico, Guam, and U.S. Virgin Islands.
Employers are going beyond state laws to follow the best practice of NO use of cell phones while driving:

- Owens-Corning – 15,000 employees (CEO – 90 days of no cell phone use, hand-held or hands-free, while driving.)
- Cummins – 48,000 employees
- City of Tulsa Oklahoma (banned all non-emergency use)
STRATEGIES TO REDUCE RISK – CONT.

• Safe Driving Kit from the National Safety Council (NSC) at http://safety.nsc.org/safe-driving-kit
  ✓ FREE educational material, sample policy, etc.
  ✓ Develop, implement and enforce.

• Sign up for Distracted Driving e-Newsletter, Focus on the Drive.
  ✓ Keep updated on new research, educational materials and state laws
  ✓ Impact stories related to cell phone distracted driving.
• Turn the phone OFF while driving or put it out of reach (e.g., in trunk)
• Enable *Do Not Disturb While Driving* feature or use equivalent app.
• Set different ring and text tones for specific contacts.
• Tell people who call you often to call twice in a row; park and return the call.
• Legally park in safe location to use cell phone.

✓ Road / highway shoulders are not considered safe locations; your vehicle may cause a travel or sight restriction.

✓ Most parking lots are considered ideal locations.

✓ During low-light conditions, choose a well-lit area, be aware of your surroundings and lock doors.
Objectives revisited:

✓ Increase awareness about cognitive distraction.
✓ Prompt changes in behavior.
✓ Promote safe and successful habits.
Stay focused, stay safe!