

S. A. F. E. NEWSLETTER

Safety Awareness For Employees

UAMS

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One Second Away

As the modern workplace becomes increasingly digital and demanding, distractions have become both common and dangerous, impacting not just productivity but safety as well. Whether it's a buzzing smartphone, environmental noise, headphones or daydreaming, distractions can lead to serious workplace accidents.

According to a recent survey, an alarming 59% of respondents reported being distracted by their phones during work hours. Up to 24% reported at least one workplace incident directly linked to digital distractions such as texting or checking social media. Distractions in the workplace are more than just minor inconveniences, they are a serious safety concern that can lead

to injuries, lost productivity, and financial loss. As technology continues to evolve and the pace of work accelerates, the potential for distraction will only grow. That's why it's critical for organizations to take a proactive, comprehensive approach to managing distractions. Understanding the risks and implementing strategies to reduce distractions is essential for creating a safer, more focused work environment.

By combining cognitive tools, clear policies, environmental design, and a strong culture of safety, employers can significantly reduce the risk of distraction-related incidents. But this isn't just about rules and regulations, it's about creating a workplace where employees feel supported, focused, and empowered to do their best work safely.

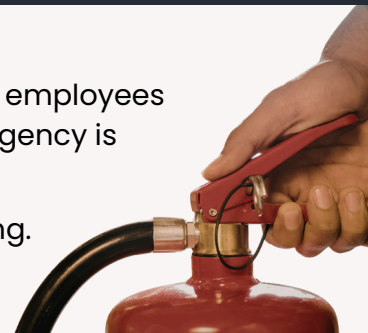
Ultimately, safety is a shared responsibility. When we each demonstrate focused behavior and hold each other accountable, individuals are equipped with the tools to manage their attention, everyone benefits.

Let's stay alert, stay aware, and stay safe—together.

Safety Spotlight

In case of a fire emergency, would you know what to do? Does your team? Equipping employees with the knowledge and confidence needed to respond effectively during a fire emergency is critical. Should the need arise, would you **P.A.S.S.** the test?

The UAMS Fire & Life Safety division is now providing hands-on fire extinguisher training. For more information or to schedule a training session, contact Mike Rhoades at 501-686-5551.



Environmental Health & Safety



501-686-5536



<https://uams.edu/ISS/depts/campusop/ohs/default>

Arrive Alive

Vehicle crashes are the No. 1 cause of workplace fatalities, and distracted driving has become a persistent danger on our roads. In fact, half of drivers say they have felt pressure from their employer to drive distracted according to a National Safety Council survey.

While staying productive is important, distracted driving should never be considered a business necessity. Many distractions exist while driving, but cell phones are a top distraction because so many drivers use them for long periods of time each day. Almost everyone has seen a driver distracted by a cell phone, but what we often fail to realize is that driver is you.

New technology in vehicles is causing us to become more distracted behind the wheel than ever before. Fifty-three percent of drivers believe if manufacturers put "infotainment" dashboards and hands-free technology in vehicles, they must be safe. With some state laws focusing on handheld bans, many drivers honestly believe they are making the safe choice by using a hands-free device. But in fact, these technologies distract our brains – and continue to distract us long after we've used them.

Make no mistake: This multitasking technology is about convenience, not safety.

On average, approximately 3200 people are killed every year in distracted driving-related crashes. That's according to the National Safety Council, which observes Distracted Driving Awareness Month every April. The Council says the three types of distracted driving: **Visual**, causing you to take your eyes off the road; **Manual**, causing you to take your hands off the wheel; and **Cognitive**, causing you to take your mind off the task of driving safely.

So, what's distracting you? How can you avoid driving distracted?

Before setting out, adjust your car's side mirrors and rearview mirror. Pick what you want to listen to. If you'll be using GPS, enter the address of where you're going and check the route so you have an idea of where you're going and can keep your eyes on the road. When you're driving, don't multitask. Your hands need to always be on the wheel.

Distracted driving isn't just a danger to you, it puts everyone around you at risk, including other drivers, pedestrians, road workers and first responders. If you do need to make a call or help someone in the back seat, first pull over in a safe, well-lit location.

Remember, hands-free devices don't make you safer. While they allow for one more hand to be placed on the steering wheel, they do not reduce the distraction to the brain. The message is a simple one, when you are behind the wheel, your only job is to drive.



Safety Awareness For Employees

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall

Being aware of your surroundings while navigating campus corridors is critical because these spaces are dynamic, high-risk environments where patients, staff, and equipment are constantly on the move—often under time pressures. A lack of awareness can quickly lead to injuries, delays in care, or compromised patient safety.

At its core, situational awareness involves being aware of what is happening around you, understanding its significance, and anticipating what could happen next. In healthcare, this includes recognizing changes in a patient's condition, noticing environmental hazards, and understanding how different activities and people interact within a space.

Traffic mirrors are a simple but highly effective safety tool used to reduce the risks associated with blind corners in a wide range of environments. These mirrors—often convex in shape—are designed to provide a wide-angle field of view, allowing individuals to see around obstacles where direct line of sight may be limited.

In a healthcare setting like ours, these blind corners may present a significant hazard because they increase the likelihood of collisions between people and equipment. When you add increased noise, limited visibility, and time pressures—situational awareness can often be greatly reduced (especially when distracted by a phone call or text message). Traffic mirrors help mitigate these dangers by improving visibility and giving users advance warning of approaching traffic or personnel.

Hospitals are full of moving people and equipment. Blind corners, tight hallways, and sudden movements make collisions a real risk. On our campuses, situational awareness isn't just a good habit—it's a safety essential. It protects patients, staff, and visitors while helping the entire system run smoothly and efficiently.



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