

# Traffic Safety Huddle

## Distraction and Parking Lots

Length: 2-5 minutes

**To prepare:** Read the background information.

### Background

- According to the National Safety Council (NSC), as many as **66% of drivers** may be pulling into and exiting out of parking spaces while **distracted**.
- **66% of drivers nationwide make phone calls and 56% text while driving** through parking lots.
- NSC found that at least **60,000 people are injured** and approximately 500 people die every year in **more than 50,000 parking lot crashes**.
- Cell phones may be the reason for this alarming trend.
  - Texting or talking on the phone is a leading reason for distracted driving in general.
  - The ease one feels in a parking lot may be the reason more drivers are willing to operate their vehicles while distracted.
  - Researchers say slower speeds in parking lots give people a false sense of security. Even though drivers tend to maintain slower speeds in parking lots and garages, the consequences of driving distracted can be devastating.

### Discussion

- Distraction and parking lots can be a deadly combination.
- An NSC poll found that as many as **two-thirds of drivers** may be **pulling into shopping centers distracted**.
- **Impact of driving distracted** at a slow speed.
- Pedestrians and children unintentionally left in vehicles are at risk.

### Question

**What do you think is the leading culprit for distraction?**

- Cell phones cause the most distraction for drivers, whether they are talking, texting, checking social media or browsing on a website. The risk of distraction is deadly.

**NSC**  
**public poll**  
indicates 66%  
make calls while  
driving through  
parking lots.

## Distraction and Parking Lots

### Common parking lot scenarios

- A person exiting their vehicle becomes a pedestrian.
- Workers may feel safe walking to the workplace from the parking lot. However, there may be many other vehicles moving about the parking lot. Distraction – such as walking to the building while checking text messages – can cause a worker to miss seeing these other vehicles.
- Drivers whose routine is changed and who may have their mind on the next thing in their day, may inadvertently leave a young child in the vehicle. Distracted pedestrians may also miss seeing children unattended in another vehicle in the lot.
- 24% of child heatstroke deaths in vehicles occurred at a workplace.

### Question:

#### How quickly can a vehicle interior heat up, even on a cloudy day?

- On average, the temperature inside a vehicle increases 19 degrees in 10 minutes.

| Elapsed Time | Outside Air Temperature |     |     |     |     |     |
|--------------|-------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|              | 70                      | 75  | 80  | 85  | 90  | 95  |
| 0 minutes    | 70                      | 75  | 80  | 85  | 90  | 95  |
| 10 minutes   | 89                      | 94  | 99  | 104 | 109 | 114 |
| 20 minutes   | 99                      | 104 | 109 | 114 | 119 | 124 |
| 30 minutes   | 104                     | 109 | 114 | 119 | 124 | 129 |
| 40 minutes   | 108                     | 113 | 118 | 123 | 128 | 133 |
| 50 minutes   | 111                     | 116 | 121 | 126 | 131 | 136 |
| 60 minutes   | 113                     | 118 | 123 | 128 | 133 | 138 |

Courtesy Jan Null, CCM; Department of Meteorology & Climate Science, San Jose State University

### Summary

- Even though people tend to drive a lot slower in a parking lot, the consequences of distraction can be deadly.
- People have their heads down; they are on their phones whether they are behind the wheel or walking through the lot.



### Parking lot scenarios



Workers may feel safe walking to the workplace from the parking lot.



Distraction can cause a worker to miss seeing other vehicles.



Drivers may inadvertently leave a young child in the vehicle.

**Every life on the road matters.  
Drive distraction-free, drive hands-free.**