

HOW TO KEEP YOUR COMMERCIAL FLEET DRIVERS FOCUSED ON THE ROAD

People around the globe are generally in a fog from sheltering. We have all been living with uncertainty and trying to decipher all of the mixed advice that experts and media have been sending our way since March. You may be particularly nervous and concerned with the safety of your commercial fleet drivers, and rightly so. After being holed up during the COVID-19 pandemic, they may have developed some phone-reliant habits over the past few months, which certainly do not mix well with driving. Are you leery of these new tendencies being revealed in the cabins of your vehicles? In addition, their driving skills may have dulled over the homebound months, there are certainly other drivers on the road driving distracted, as well. All this builds a recipe for potential disaster.

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

Let's consider some facts:

- Humans are habitual. It's in our nature. Even before the pandemic started, people reportedly checked their phone 80 times each day on average -- according to a study, led by Nottingham Trent University. And during quarantine? That number grew significantly for four consecutive months. Whether playing Words With Friends, texting buddies, calling family, FaceTime chatting, or checking the news, people were on their phones more than ever. Do people now returning to work still have the urge to get on their phone often? Absolutely! It's a difficult habit to break, indeed consider how difficult it is for your teenager to put their own phone away. Is this usage pattern transferring to your commercial fleet drivers who are getting back on the road now?. You need to break the habit quickly -- and NOCELL can instantly help.
- Even though the volume of cars on the road is significantly down -- because of the pandemic -- accidents are up in many spots. **The Massachusetts Department of Transportation reported that the number of fatalities on its roads doubled in April, despite a reduction in traffic of up to 50 percent.** Primarily due to the relatively empty and open roads, more people are speeding now. Police in many major cities have reported this same phenomena. Partly due to more people working from home, which is likely to become a permanent situation for many Americans. So, you may expect the roads to be relatively clear for the foreseeable future, which will result in more risk-taking drivers out there. There are more performance vehicles on the road these days, as well, which seem to invite drivers to test the speed capabilities of their vehicles. Add to the fact that there's more distracted drivers behind the wheel, it's a stage for more collisions. Fleet managers need to nip distracted driving in the bud among their own drivers.
- Due to a valid fear of crowds, many are avoiding riding on a mass transit buses and trains with strangers. This trend may inevitably cause a shift toward more car ownership and leases, once the pandemic passes. That means more cars on the road. More distracted drivers. One additional reason to take measures now to limit your liability.
- Distracted driving accidents occur every three minutes, killing nine people every day in America. The result is an expense to guilty parties of \$9.2 billion annually, ensuing a massive increase in insurance premiums in the aftermath. Regardless of the severity, any driver in 47 states now can be pulled over for holding a phone. According to tech company TeenSafe, **80 percent of all accidents are caused by a distracted driver.** A Pittsburgh injury lawyer claims that the act of texting while driving by itself accounts for roughly 1.6 million annual crashes and 390,000 injuries. But there are another 900,000 crashes each year attributed to distracted drivers. Fleet drivers log

3x as many hours and miles on the roads than the general public. How are you planning to keep your drivers, and the other drivers safe?

- Auto insurance companies report that sending or reading a text message takes a driver's eyes off the road for at least five seconds. In that time, a vehicle traveling at 55 miles per hour moves 110 yards -- a distance 10 percent longer than a football field. That's a lot of distance to potentially cause damage, and a long time to not be watching the road. In fact, experts claim once a driver becomes distracted, it takes only three seconds for a crash to occur. The simple act of reaching for an object boosts the chances of a road accident by eight times. That includes navigating a GPS map, making phone calls, texting -- or any other reason a driver feels the need to grab their phone while behind the wheel. Distractions are manual, as well as visual and cognitive.
- With the pandemic hampering our normal lives, people are thinking and feeling on much deeper levels. Our cognitive states have us more sad, angry, fear filled, preoccupied, and less patient these days. These traits do not disappear when one sits in the driver's seat. Being on the phone is the very last distraction any driver needs. NOCELL eliminates that factor, setting up each vehicle in your commercial fleet with a tiny device. It removes all non-essential apps from up to three smart devices, not just masking them. Without those apps and their reminders, your driver has the ability to stay focused on the road with no reason to grab for the phone. As a fleet manager, you can dictate exactly which apps are authorized or non-authorized, based on your company policy. It's a very flexible system, with respect to your options and set-up preferences. Think of it as Pavlovian training: Every time the driver reaches for the phone to look at an app that's not there, he or she eventually stops reaching.
- As families have come together closer than ever during the pandemic, people are staying in touch more. Fleet drivers are no exception. It's natural to be more socially dependent on our phones. And as a result, some may try to smuggle unauthorized devices into the cab to keep in communication with their loved ones. We understand. But the road is a place that requires 100 percent focus. The NOCELL Platform instantly detects those extra devices and sends your fleet administrators real-time signals any time they're operated while the vehicle is moving.
- It's a complicated world these days. Fortunately, NOCELL's system offers some breathing room -- giving fleet administrators complete tracking ability, along with an easy-to-navigate admin portal.

BEST PRACTICES

Arming Your Fleet Manager with Control and Peace of Mind

Especially during this pandemic era when there's so much unknown and many parts of life are chaotic, NOCELL can literally and figuratively add some control back to you and your company. "This is the right product at the right time for the right price," says Tyler Ortiz, operations manager of McKinley Elevator. It's peace of mind -- and who can't use that right now. "NOCELL's product came at a perfect time for the fleet industry. The importance of our driver's safety, and concern for others on the road, is what makes us successful, here at McKinley. Our goal at the end of the day is to get our team home safely to their families. NOCELL's product is a vital piece of that accomplishment. As driving distractions increase, you can only imagine the concerns for my driver's safety has increased as well. With NOCELL, the chances of my team being distracted while driving decreases immensely. That in itself is a win."

Prevent Accidents

The technology to keep motorist's distraction-free is out there, accessible and available -- able to help your drivers stay safe and accident-free. Plus, it's affordable, easy to install, can be quickly customized to your needs, and is simple to use. And it can be up-and-running in minutes. "This technology should be standard in every single vehicle moving forward," says Mitchell Zarders, a Senior In-Vehicle Infotainment Engineer. "It will save so many lives."

Eye in The Sky

It's not like you can sit in the cab with your fleet drivers, to make sure they're not checking their phone or even pulling out a private phone to use for texting or calling. Or can you? "We purchased the NOCELL Technologies Platform, because our fleet managers have a strict hands-free cell phone policy," says Cole Stevens, principal at Stevens Trucking.

Policy or Not, You Need Help

Just because your company may have an employee-signed distracted driving policy on paper means nothing if you can't administer it in real life. "In 2012, Coca-Cola paid \$21 million to a woman injured when struck by an employee in a company-owned vehicle using a hands-free device," posts Donald Dunphy, Communications Manager/Editor for NAFA Fleet Management Association on the company website. "Coca-Cola had a cell phone use policy in place but was deemed negligent, nonetheless. It is too late after a crash to protect your organization from significant legal issues and punitive damages if your drivers are found at fault." NOCELL offers a tangible, physical, simple solution that will indeed keep your drivers off of their devices.

Peer Pressure

"On a typical day, more than 700 people are injured in distracted driving crashes," states the National Safety Council on its website. "Talking on a cell phone – even hands-free – or texting or programming an in-vehicle infotainment system diverts your attention away from driving. Keep yourself and others around you safe and #justdrive." This is just one of many national campaigns reminding drivers to eliminate distractions while they are driving and to stay focused. This growing awareness will persuade more companies to invoke further technology like NOCELL into the cabins of their fleet.

Taking Advantage of The Latest Technology

Safety is an investment, not an expense. An investment that gives your company a competitive advantage because of the opportunities to keep your drivers productive and safer. The technology that is available to keep drivers focused is growing daily. Pulse for Fleet is one such technology. "NOCELL protects drivers from themselves, while Pulse helps to protect from the driver behind them, says Lori Olson, Vice President of Kinetech, LLC and Pulse for Fleet sales director. "Mobile devices have changed our lives. Where we used to be tied to our computers at a desk, we can now walk down a city street with the same technology in our pocket. Over the last few months, even though we have been homebound and able to utilize computers, tablets and phones, people have become like Pavlov's dogs to the iconic 'ping' of an incoming message. That 'ping' is a reminder that we are important to someone, and we cannot deny them or ourselves of responding. When the phone rings, we jump because we are able to have a real conversation in a time where those seem few and far between. Email has been a dominating force, and if not answered quickly, may be buried in the masses. This is reality in 2020 – and it's all very difficult to turn off. Just because we are driving, we are not able to turn off our automatic responses to answer it. Implementing technology that helps to prevent distractions and increased reaction time for drivers is more important than ever. NOCELL is affordable and can mute fleet phones from incoming messages, while Pulse modifies your third brake light to get the attention of tailing drivers who don't have NOCELL.

Distracted driving is at an all-time high, and one person at a time, we are responsible for keeping our roads safe for all.”

Bring Back Order to Your Fleet

If you'd like help keeping your fleet drivers focused on the road, email info@nocell.com or call NOCELL at 800-471-3752. You can schedule a free no-obligation demo. But beware: Once you see the simplicity and genius of NOCELL, you're going to want it for your fleet.