

## Driving Safety



Driving is something that we often consider a rite of passage. It is also something that is necessary in Southern California. It's how we get to work and home and shopping and entertainment and everything else we want to do. But driving is also a privilege we should not take for granted.

When we are traveling from one location to another, we take for granted that we will arrive there and arrive home safely. It's a reasonable expectation because we've done it so many times. But we take a risk every time we get into a car.

Here is some information that can help you maintain your good driving record and increase your chances of traveling and arriving home safely.

***"Distracted driving is a dangerous epidemic on America's roadways. In 2011 alone, over 3,000 people were killed in distracted driving crashes."***

This information is from the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA). Cell phones have

become a huge safety hazard. Nothing is so important that it can't wait until you have stopped and turned off the car. If you feel like you absolutely must pick up your phone while driving, put it in the trunk so you can't get to it until you have stopped.

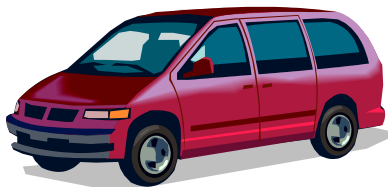
They also reported that *"The U.S. Department of Transportation is leading the effort to stop texting and cell phone use behind the wheel. Since 2009, we have held two national distracted driving summits, banned texting and cell phone use for commercial drivers, encouraged states to adopt tough laws, and launched several campaigns to raise public awareness about the issue."* You can find more information and join the cause at [www.distraction.gov](http://www.distraction.gov).



Of course, the use of cell phones is not the only distraction you can encounter when driving. Think of driving with your children in the car, or eating lunch, or hearing your favorite song on the radio, or trying to locate an address you've never been to before. This is just a short list of things that can create distracted driving. It's your responsibility to make sure you are not distracted or creating a distraction.

## Passenger Van Safety

As a District, we often rent passenger vans when departments need to take a group off campus to a field trip or a meeting. These vans handle very differently than smaller vehicles because they are typically longer, higher and wider. They require us to use the side mirrors for changing lanes, require additional braking distances and have a higher risk of crashes and rollovers if not properly driven and maintained.



NHTSA research shows there's a greater risk of rollover due to:

- Inexperienced drivers
- Improperly sized and/or inflated tires
- Incorrectly load3ed cargo and passengers that affect the center of gravity

Therefore:

- The driver should be well trained and experienced as well as well-rested; fatigue can affect driving and response time
- Each vehicle should be inspected before every trip; pay close attention to tires during these inspections
- It's the driver's responsibility, in addition to every individual, to make sure all passengers wear their seat belts
- Don't forget to adjust your side mirrors before putting the van into drive

## Buckling up

Buckling up is the single most effective thing you can do to protect yourself in a crash.

**In 2008, seat belts saved more than 13,000 lives nationwide. From 2004 to 2008, seat belts saved over 75,000 lives—enough people to fill a large sports arena.**



During a crash, being buckled up helps keep you safe and secure inside your vehicle, whereas being completely thrown out of a vehicle is almost always deadly. Seat belts are the best defense against impaired, aggressive, and distracted drivers.

Air bags are designed to work with seat belts, not replace them.

In fact, if you don't wear your seat belt, you could be thrown into a rapidly opening frontal air bag; a movement of such force could injure or even kill you. See [www.safercar.gov](http://www.safercar.gov) for more on air bag safety.

**For the sake of you and your family, please pay attention to safety while driving.**