

Focused Topic: Distractions

SHORT LESSON APPROPRIATE FOR IN-CAR OR CLASSROOM

Learning Objectives

- Understand that distracted driving around tracks and trains can lead to a collision
- Identify distractions that can impede driving around tracks and trains

Introduction

Share the following with the class: *Distractions on the road can make you four times more likely to have a collision which involves an injury. Consider the following scenario: A distracted driver doesn't notice the signs and pavement markings when approaching a railroad crossing. By the time the driver notices the train, there isn't enough distance to come to a complete stop, and the car drives into the passing train.*

Think something like this could never happen to you? Turn off your cell phone and read through the following descriptions of distracted driving around trains and tracks. Can you spot which ones really happened and which are made up? Raise your hand for each one you think is real:

- The radio is on. The driver is singing along. The end of a train has just cleared a crossing ahead as the driver approaches. The car begins to cross—and is struck by a train coming from the other direction. The driver didn't hear the sound of the approaching train's horn.
- A driver turns around to say something to a passenger in the backseat and doesn't see the crossbuck marking a railroad crossing or the oncoming train, and drives in front of the train.
- A texting driver rear-ends a school bus that has come to a complete stop at a railroad crossing.
- A distracted driver drives their car through lowered gates, breaking them, and collides with the side of a passing train—literally driving into a train.
- A social-savvy teen decides a train track would be a great place to take a selfie, and is so focused on getting a great head angle that the approaching train was never noticed.

All of these things have actually happened. Some of the most dangerous distractions while driving are everyday things that are such a regular part of our non-driving lives, that you may not even realize how dangerous they can be while driving. We are going to watch a short video and then talk about distractions while driving.

Watch Video

Distractions [2:00]

Facilitate a brief class conversation using the following questions:

- *What distractions do Jessica, Ryan and Tommy mention while sitting in the car?*
Answer: texting, surfing the web, looking for music, talking on the phone, talking with passengers, eating, putting on makeup, zoning out
- *What else might distract you when driving?*
- *What should you do if you get a text or phone call while you are driving?*