

DISTRACTED DRIVING AND ROAD RAGE

By: Michael Brennan



Summertime, Distracted Driving and Road Rage

Summer is here which means a lot of new hazards on the roads. Summer time may bring nice weather and long days but it also brings visitors who do not know your area, distracted drivers, young drivers etc. All this can lead to extreme frustration to those of us who are on the road trying to do a job. If it isn't bad enough that we are not on vacation like the rest of the world seems to be, we also have to deal with all of these other issues. It's like a scene from the movie "Vacation" with Chevy Chase but in real life it's just not very funny.

I am on the road for business most days and not a day goes by when I do not see vehicles pulled over to the side that have been in an accident of some sort. These are reminders to us of what the consequences can be if we are distracted or if we let our frustration get the best of us. Most of your reading this article drive for a living which means *you are held to a higher standard*. I know it may not be part of your written job description but *you are role models for other drivers* and when you are involved in an accident you may not get the benefit of the doubt.

It is with this in mind that I thought it would be a good time for a reminder about the constant battle we face with **Road Rage**. It is very difficult to do but when I get the urge to retaliate or feel the craziness coming on I **try** to remind myself of two things.

First is what we all have to lose if we allow ourselves to lose control. *We have family, friends, and employers counting on us to return in the same condition we left in. We are important to others.*

The second idea is a lot more difficult. **ASSUME POSITIVE INTENT**. Much easier said than done but if we assume positive intent of the other drivers it can help. Is the vehicle full of

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screaming kids distracting the driver? Is the vehicle in front of us that just cut us off a new driver in his father's pick up truck for the first time who doesn't know about the blind spot? Is the driver dealing with a medical emergency? There is a reason for their driving maneuvers and it's not intentional or personal. Remember you are the professional driver.

Like I said easier said than done, I know how difficult this is to do from personal experience. However, given the consequences of road rage we need to do everything we can to try and remain in control.

Here are some other techniques which may be effective as well:

- Before you get in the truck-Expect the unexpected-Plan for delays, traffic etc.
- It's not personal-Assume Positive Intent!
- Early to bed-If you are tired you will be more susceptible to becoming angry.
- Have a snack and something to drink in the car.
- Play Music or Books on tape-These can help keep us relaxed.

Breathe-Sometimes we actually need to remind ourselves to take a deep cleansing breath which helps put things back into perspective.

I hope this information is useful and helps improve the safety process at your company.

