

# SMART DRIVER<sup>®</sup>

August 2024

## FOCUS ON MINDFULNESS TO IMPROVE DRIVING “DISTRACTIONS KILL: STAY FOCUSED, SAVE LIVES”



With the advent of more and more technologies competing for our attention, it is becoming more difficult for humans to sift through a swarm of distractions and focus on those items that are worth paying attention to. Driver distractions and inattention are not new, they are old enemies. Drivers are encouraged to pay attention and focus on the road, yet preventable crashes still occur, leaving a motor carrier’s management team members scratching their heads in frustration. One solution, and arguably the solution to the distracted driving problem, is simple mindfulness.

Mindfulness refers to one’s ability to be in the moment, and not only be aware of one’s surroundings, “including potential driving hazards”, but also be alert enough to make the right decision to avoid the hazard before a loss occurs. One could argue that mindfulness is what separates good drivers from bad ones. After all, most drivers face the same types of distractions on the road and inside the cab. From daydreaming and texting to gawking at a passing crash scene and losing focus on the vehicle in front of the truck, drivers have countless distractions competing for their attention. It is the mindful drivers, though, the ones who can drive millions of miles without a preventable crash, who can tune out what is non-essential and remain focused on what is important: driving.

Here are some ways drivers can practice mindfulness and be in a state of moment-to-moment awareness.

### PUT IN-CAB TECHNOLOGIES OUT OF SIGHT

Electronic logging devices (ELD), GPS units, satellite radios, and of course, cell phones are essential devices for drivers but are also the most common in-cab distractions. Before the truck moves, drivers should start their ELDs, tune to their favorite radio stations and turn off their phones or put them on silent, and then put those devices out of sight. Drivers will need to see the driving directions, but the GPS should be programmed before leaving, as well. Remember, cell phones connected to blue tooth also add to driver’s distraction. Various studies have shown that driving while speaking through a blue tooth device also takes driver’s focus away from driving. Drivers should refrain from this practice.

### CREATE A SCHEDULE FOR CHECKING MESSAGES

With the cell phone and ELD out of sight and silenced, drivers will be less tempted to check messages. Drivers should schedule a time to check messages, and call into dispatch.

### MENTALLY PREPARE BEFORE STARTING

Before starting a trip, drivers should take a moment to get their heads in the right place and focus on the task at hand. Distracted driving is a choice, a bad habit that can be corrected. There is too much at stake for a driver to take for granted the responsibility of operating a commercial vehicle safely.

*Note: These lists are not intended to be all-inclusive.*

This material is intended to be a broad overview of the subject matter and is provided for informational purposes only. Old Republic Insurance Company of Canada does not provide legal advice to its customers, nor does it advise insureds on employment-related issues. Therefore, the subject matter is not intended to serve as legal or employment advice for any issue(s) that may arise in the operations of its insureds. Legal advice should always be sought from the insured’s legal counsel. Old Republic Insurance Company of Canada shall have neither liability nor responsibility to any person or entity with respect to any loss, action, or inaction alleged to be caused directly or indirectly as a result of the information contained herein.

Used with permission by Great West Casualty Company.

# Knowledge Verification

Driver's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

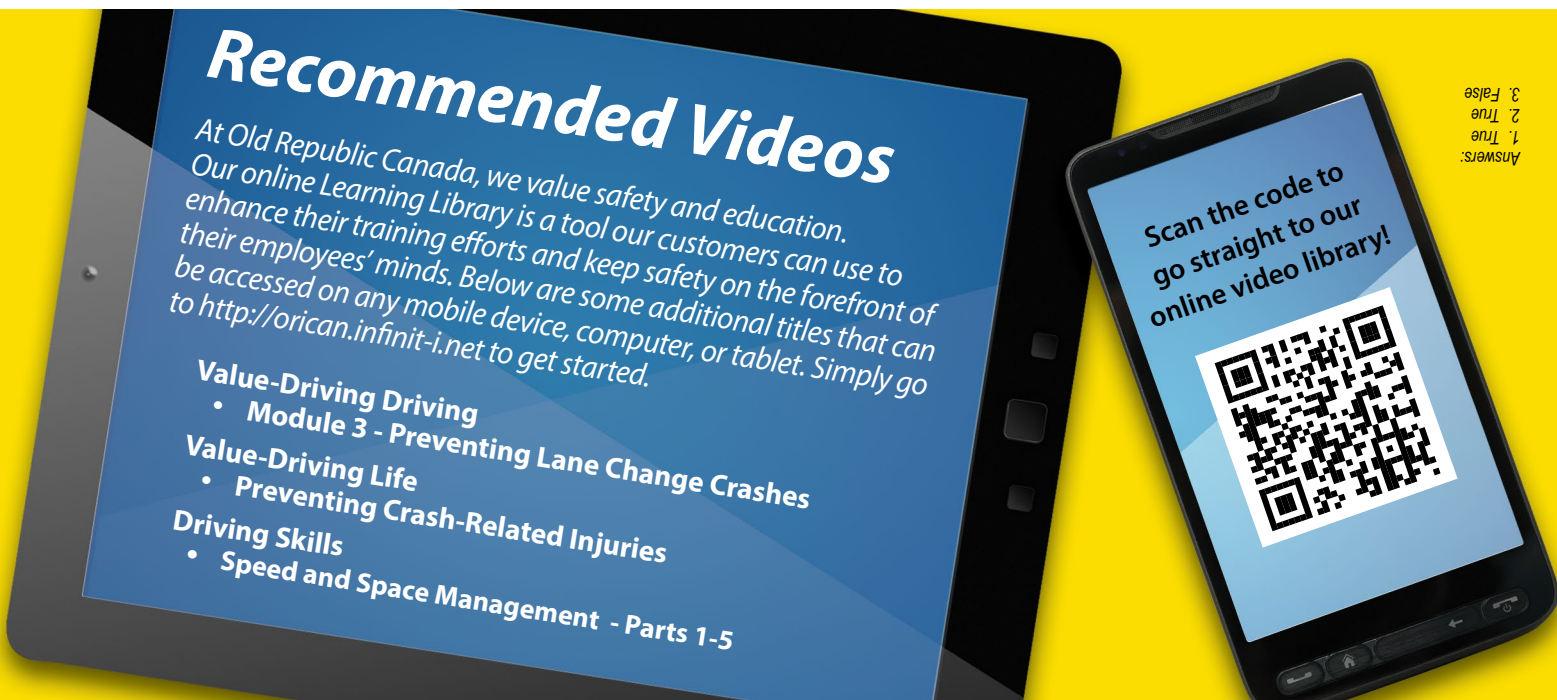
Driver's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer, and forward a completed copy to your Safety Department/Safety Representative.

- |                                                                |      |       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|------|-------|
| 1. Distracted driving is a personal choice.                    | True | False |
| 2. Daydreaming is just as much of a distraction as texting is. | True | False |
| 3. It is ok to program your GPS while driving.                 | True | False |



**FOCUS ON MINDFULNESS TO IMPROVE DRIVING**