



HOLMES & WISELEY, P.C.

LAWYERS TO TRUCK DRIVERS AND THEIR COMPANIES

IT PAYS TO BE SAFE **No. 36, September, 2014** **Avoiding Distracted Driving**

When a truck driver is traveling down a road and his/her attention is not on the road, he/she is not only putting him/herself in danger, but also the other vehicles and pedestrians that may be using the roadway. Distracted driving is defined in most commercial driver license manuals issued by the various states as “any activity that may shift your full attention from the driving task.”

Taking your eyes off the road or hands off the steering wheel presents obvious driving risks. Minimal activities that take your mind off from driving are just as dangerous. Your eyes can gaze at objects in the driving scene, including all those billboards and advertisements, thus resulting in a driver’s failure to pay attention to the challenges presented on the roadway before him.

Distractions are greater than ever with cell phones, texting, Qualcomm messages, talking to passengers, adjusting the radio/CD players, iPods, eating, drinking, reading maps or so often, just picking up something that fell off the seat.

Here are a few things to help you avoid these issues as you travel the roadway:

1. Pre-program radio stations;
2. Pre-load your favorite CD’s or attach your iPod before heading out on the road;
3. Clear your truck of any objects that could fall on the floor from the passenger seat or dash that simply don’t need to be there;
4. Review maps and plan your route before you begin driving;
5. Adjust all your mirrors for best all-around visibility before you start your trip;
6. Don’t attempt to read or write while you drive, and particularly **NO TEXTING**;
7. If at all possible, avoid smoking, eating and drinking while you drive. While we know that it’s necessary as part of the life of truck drivers, minimizing this is helpful in preventing distraction; and
8. Lastly, **don’t engage in complex, emotionally intense conversations with passengers in your vehicles or on a cell phone.** Pull off the road for cell phone use if at all possible and give the person you are speaking with your undivided attention. Hands-free only while driving.

Everyone wants you home safe, so keep the distractions at a minimum, your eyes on the road and remember, you get paid to be safe!