



# TRANSNEWS

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Trans-News is a newsletter for our customers dedicated to bringing you useful and timely information about safety, loss control, insurance and industry issues.



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- No Texting!!!

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# SAFETY TIPS

Volume 29

## ***Make a Mental Map***

When you're on an extended automobile trip, it's a good idea to keep a road map handy, especially if you're in strange territory. Occasionally you may also run across a diagram on the bulletin board or in a newspaper that holds your attention. In either case, the map or the diagram assists you in finding your way around or in obtaining some other kind of information.

Rarely do you see anyone walking around at work with a map. That's because each person has a mental map of where they must go to perform their job. But a mental map shouldn't stop at simple directions. For safety's sake, the mental map you make should

carry several other important items, such as location of the first aid station, fire extinguishers and other emergency equipment. But, above all, it should carry a well defined picture of your job and the equipment you use. Here are a couple of actual cases that occurred in other industries which highlight the importance of mental alertness on the job:

The branch office of a bank was robbed and a sizeable amount of money was taken. The manager, in an exhibition of foolhardiness, pursued the hold-up man out the door. In the chase that followed, the manager fell down and fractured his knee. Actually, he was lucky

not to have been shot.

No doubt the manager had been instructed as to how to react in a hold-up situation, and maybe he had even instructed other employees on the same subject. But when the emergency arose, he reacted contrary to good judgment, and although he escaped unharmed in the hold-up, he was injured in the action that followed.

Apparently he didn't have a mental map, or he got it confused with something he had seen on television. After the hold-up man left, the branch manager should have gone to the nearest telephone or alarm system. Pursuit of the hold-up man added an unsafe act to an already unsafe situation.

In another incident, a supervisor was explaining the function of a die to a die-setter. While pointing, and placing a finger on the die, the press accidentally cycled, amputating the finger.

In this instance, a mental lapse resulted in an accident. Needless to say, the mishap to the supervisor proved to be a very realistic explanation of the function of the die.

These incidents illustrate that alertness makes a mental map readable.

Here are some items that safety experts say should be included on your mental map, in addition

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**Taking Workplace Safety One Step Too Far**

## Drive Now Talk Later

“Cell phones cause deadly distractions”

That’s a scary statement but recent reports and studies appear to have come to that conclusion.

The University of Utah

“...corroborates earlier research studies indicating that both hand-held and hands-free models pose a similar risk of distraction and accident potential.” They further stated that “...even casual conversation while driving and using a cell phone create a visual blindness or ‘inattention blindness’ which decreases a driver’s attention to visual cues and situational awareness. This, in turn, affects the driver’s ability to process traffic cues and make sound driving judgments.”

The *National Highway Traffic Safety Administration*(NHTSA), “...estimates that driver distraction is a factor in at least 26% (up to 30%) of traffic fatalities...”. The *Network of Employers for Traffic Safety*(NETS) has indicated that approximately 50% of all crashes are caused by distracted drivers. This three year research study of Oklahoma crash data associated cell phone use to a nine-fold increase in fatalities.

The 1996 study by the *Accident Analysis and Prevention Journal* showed that “...risk of collision increases by 34% among drivers with cell phones. Drivers using their phones more than 50 minutes a month increased their risk of collision five-fold.”

The *New England Journal of Medicine* found that the risk of having an accident while driving and using a cell phone was four times greater than it is when not using a cell phone. There was no statistically significant difference in the risk between a “hand-held” and a “hands-free” phone while driving.

There are at least 20 more research studies all coming to the same conclusion. The use of the cell phone, while the vehicle is in motion, significantly increases the chances that the driver will be involved in an accident.

**LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS:** Several court cases have resulted in high dollar awards including one in Arkansas where a lumber wholesaler agreed to pay \$16.2 million to a woman who was severely disabled by one of its salesmen who was talking on his cell phone at the time of the accident. Phone records were subpoenaed for the trial.

Do we need further proof? I don’t think so. Probably everyone of us has had at least one near miss with somebody holding a cell phone up to his/her ear.

**Precautions we can take:** Be extra careful when you see other drivers using cell phones. Ask people who are likely to call you to not call when they know you will be driving. If you must talk, limit your conversation. Tell callers that you are driving and ask if you may call them back.

Any time we think we can save by continuing to drive while using a cell phone is not worth the risk. Let’s all make it a point to ----

**Drive Now, Talk Later!**

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### Mental Map

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to your own work area and equipment:

The closest first aid station and procedures for contacting the police and an ambulance. The closest fire extinguisher and fire alarm. It’s obvious why these items head the list, although the other suggestions are not necessarily of less importance in their own right.

Other items are: where to turn in tools for repair, where tools, other than the ones you keep and use at your workplace, are kept.

The nearest water fountain, areas where you’re most likely to encounter either hand or motorized trucks, areas where there may be danger from high working places or

suspended loads.

The spot where you can usually find your supervisor, the nearest restroom, and the nearest exit.

You probably have other things in mind that could be added to the list. For instance, if you worked with chemicals, you would certainly include the closest eyewash fountain and emergency shower.

The important thing to know is where to go and how to get there the quickest and safest way.

People in pain or under stress may act unwisely. They may hurry around aggravating their problems and accomplishing nothing. This is where the good mental map comes in. It can help you to react to emergency situations in the safest way as well as to perform your regular job safely

A hand holding a black flip phone in the foreground, with a car's dashboard and steering wheel visible. The background shows a road with trees and buildings, slightly out of focus.

**IF U WAN 2C2  
MORO**

**DON'T TXT N  
DRIVE 2 DAY**