

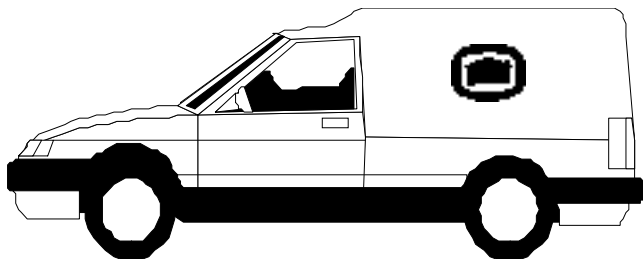


Drivers at risk from distractions

According to a study funded by the AAA Foundation, 284,000 serious accidents are caused by driver distractions. The research, which was released in May 2001, showed that objects and events outside the car were such a major source of distraction. "We found that 15 percent of drivers in the study were not paying attention and just over half of these (8.3 percent) were distracted by something inside or outside the vehicle," said Dr. Jane Stutts, manager of epidemiological studies at the University of North Carolina center and author of the study. When drivers with unknown attention status were removed from the data, the percentage of distracted drivers rose to 12.9 percent.

The study found that drivers were most often distracted by something outside their vehicle (29.4 percent) followed by adjusting a radio or CD player (11.4 percent). AAA Foundation suggests that newer cars have more complicated radio controls with more buttons, which may contribute to this distraction. Other specific distractions included talking with other occupants (10.9 percent), adjusting vehicle or climate controls (2.8 percent), eating or drinking (1.7 percent), cell-phone use (1.5 percent) and smoking (0.9 percent).

When operating a vehicle, the pest control technician or inspectors needs to remember that his task at hand is to safely operate that vehicle. Drivers should view other vehicles, and the environment around them as a threat to themselves, their vehicle and to their livelihood.



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