

A Five-minute Training Series for Pest Management Professionals

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Recognizing the Distracted Driver

When you make a conscious effort to focus 100% on your drive every time you get behind the wheel, there is still the hazard of those drivers who have not made this same commitment. Recognizing when you are driving near a distracted driver will help you avoid their mistakes.

Accident sites, construction zones, pedestrians at crosswalks, bicyclists and distracted drivers pose a hazard that demands your attention. You will not always be able to identify a distracted driver in time to avoid a collision. Knowing some signs that indicate a driver is distracted can help you stay out of harm's way.

Visual Distraction = Signs that a motorist is not visually focused on the drive include tailgating, missing traffic signals, and drifting out of the lane.

Cognitive Distraction = Signs that a motorist is not mentally focused on the drive include ignoring traffic signals, failing to respond to obvious hazards, and speeding or slowing down for no apparent reason.

If you spot a motorist exhibiting signs of distracted driving, keep your distance. Depending on how erratic the behavior is, you may also want to pull over and report the vehicle to law enforcement. A motorist who is impaired by fatigue, illness, medications, or alcohol can also be distracted and exhibit the same behaviors. Controlling another driver's actions is impossible and you should not attempt to do so.

- **Do** yield to the distracted driver in a right-of-way situation, as they may not notice you approaching or be aware that the right-of-way should be yours.
- **Do** give the inattentive driver some extra space and reduce your speed. This will lessen the chances of you becoming involved in the accident if they make a mistake.
- **Do not** reprimand a distracted driver with your horn. It may startle them into a crash situation.



Distance and space will protect you from involvement in this driver's potential mistakes. In addition to distracted drivers, you will want to learn to identify distracted bicyclists, pedestrians, construction workers and sightseeing tourists who become distracted. Your skills can come into play if any other road user in the vicinity is not paying attention.