

Tailgate meeting outline: Distracted driving

Tailgate meetings are great opportunities to discuss driving distractions with employees and engage them in finding and implementing solutions. Use this meeting guide to engage your drivers in a conversation about how to curb distracted driving.



What is a tailgate meeting?

A tailgate meeting is an on-the-job discussion held to identify key workplace hazards, to develop a plan to control those hazards and to confirm the people involved in the work know about the measures they and others on the crew are to take. Quite commonly, tailgate meetings:

- ✓ Are led by a supervisor or manager and take 10 to 20 minutes
- ✓ Focus on a single topic or a few closely-related topics
- ✓ Are held whenever the need arises or scheduled weekly.
- ✓ Take place around the tailgate of a pickup, beside a shop workbench, in the coffee room- anywhere employees are comfortable. For a distracted driving tailgate meeting, gathering near a parked vehicle provides opportunities for hands-on demonstrations.

What happens at a tailgate meeting?

Employers use tailgate meetings to:

- ✓ Have a two-way discussion with employees – provide information or instruction, and listen to feedback and concerns from the crew
- ✓ Demonstrate or explain a new procedure or practice
- ✓ Discuss a new hazard or risk
- ✓ Collaborate with workers to develop practical solutions
- ✓ Answer questions
- ✓ Talk about a recent success, near miss or incident.

Planning effective distracted driving tailgate meetings

1. Choose a distraction that is relevant to your audience.

Learning is a key objective during tailgate meetings. Through the discussion, employees should acquire information or skills they can readily apply to their driving. It's wasted time if employees will never encounter the distraction you discuss, or if they already have that distraction mastered.

- Click [here](#) to see a collection of driving distractions that your drivers probably encounter.
- There may be distractions unique to your workplace. Ask your crew for ideas.



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2. Assemble necessary information

You do not have to be an expert on each distraction, but you do need to provide practical solutions and clear guidance that employees will follow.

- ✓ Use data and real results to help explain why this distraction matters to the company, and why it should matter to them. If your organization tracks incidents and near misses involving driver distraction, use that information.
- ✓ When possible, use local resources (i.e. from BC or Canada) so your crew sees the connection.

Tip: Use a real example from your workplace or your community to explain the distraction, its consequences and its solutions. Almost every driver has first-hand experience with distractions; ask employees to share those experiences.

- ✓ Search the Internet for information that applies to your workplace, and the distraction you want to resolve. Below are a few sites you should visit.

[Road Safety At Work](#) [WorkSafeBC](#) [ICBC](#) [Distractions](#) [CCMTA](#) [RoSPA](#) [Driving for Better Business](#)

3. Get ready

- ✓ Check the regulations and company policy to ensure you are familiar with them.
- ✓ Assemble necessary materials. One-page handouts can be very effective. If you plan to use a video, double-check that the link works and present it so that everyone can see and hear it.
- ✓ Prepare a summary of the main ideas and points you want to cover. Make notes for yourself.
- ✓ Practice. Think about what you are going to say. Use language and tone that fit the audience. You can likely guess some of the questions you will hear, so be ready with good responses. If you plan to demonstrate a practice, rehearse it.

Tip: If you have employees who are passionate about distracted driving safety, let them lead the tailgate meeting. If they are a little nervous to do that, offer to help them with the preparation. Sweeten the deal with a \$20 coffee card.

4. Engage employees in the conversation

The idea is not to give a 15-minute speech; it's to provide a few interesting facts and challenging ideas that start a 15-minute conversation with employees.

- ✓ Ask questions. You don't want to put employees on the spot, but it's fair to expect them to know the answers. Ask for opinions, constructive ideas and suggestions.
- ✓ Invite each participant to share their constructive views, and ask questions.
- ✓ Answer questions openly. If you don't know, ask others if they do. If the group cannot arrive at an answer, commit to finding it and getting back to the group quickly.



Tip: Give employees an immediate opportunity to apply information discussed during the tailgate meeting. For example, if the discussion meeting is about how to avoid texting, ask them to do that today, and the rest of the week. At the next tailgate meeting, ask the crew how that went.

5. Follow up

- ✓ After the meeting, ask participants for feedback. What worked? What is missing? What's next?
- ✓ If there are outstanding questions or "to do" items assigned to you, do that work and provide the answers or information before or during the next tailgate meeting.
- ✓ Invite employee to help prepare and/or lead future tailgate meetings.
- ✓ Keep records of each tailgate meeting - the topic, who attended and meeting outcomes.

Resources

For distraction-specific ideas, check out these handy Tip Sheets and example policies.

[Tip Sheet #1 for All Drivers](#)

[Tip Sheet #2 for Commercial Vehicle Drivers](#)

[Distracted Driving Policy - Example #1](#)

[Distracted Driving Policy - Example #2](#)

[Distracted Driving Policy - Example #3](#)

