



Fleet Management Best Practices

Distracted Driving Laws and PA's

This effects all Manufacturers, Dealers and Bus Users

This is the most important topic today for both the sightseeing and shuttle bus industries. In 2012 we sounded the alarm about the incoming Distracted Driving Laws (DDL) in Canada and ones being considered in the U.S. It started with Anti Texting Laws and now some States (like California) have followed the Canadian model of NOTHING IN YOUR HANDS while the vehicle is running.

This means that you cannot have ANY ELECTRONIC DEVICE in your hands when driving including while stopped at a light. And in some cases "Distracted Driving" means no eating, drinking, shaving, putting on makeup (I'm sure you all do the latter while driving) and no hand mics. In other words, BOTH HANDS ON THE WHEEL FOR ALL DRIVERS, including all bus and van operators.

Why this is a big issue?

Is this a bad thing? Everyone has an opinion about it, but after seeing the outcome of Distracted Driving (DD) accidents, our opinion is it's a good thing. The latest stats show the yearly number of deaths from DD are 80% of the number of deaths from DUI. And there's a growing number of professional drivers of busses and tour operators involved in DD accidents, including some fatal.

Yet a bigger issue as of 2016 is two U.S. Cities (San Francisco and Seattle) HAVE BANNED or have implemented partial restrictions for commercial busses or tour drivers from doing any NARRATION with a HAND MIC OR HEADSET. **Do I have your attention yet?**

You might think that this won't happen in your area, but remember how many years it took DUI to become a serious issue, Distracted Driving Laws grew in 4 years! Media, lobbyists, insurance companies and governments at all levels are looking at this, SO ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS!

Here's the Double Whammy... safety is important but image is king!

For tour companies (including shuttle and limo companies who are crossing over to offering personal tours) I'm sure you are very aware of Trip Advisor, Twitter, Facebook and more. Now that social media reviews is a daily expectation, customers are now commenting while onboard about their experience... GOOD and BAD. "I'm scared stiff, the driver has one hand using the microphone and the other he's pointing and waving around".

You don't want this to happen with your social media presence. More importantly, you don't want to fuel a driver guide ban from doing narration in your area.

What can be done? You can do a lot!

1. Be proactive, if you are not using hands free styles mics like Headsets or Gooseneck in your operation... start today.
2. Consider wireless headsets or gooseneck options, where your drivers that are in and out of the vehicle 1000 times a day.
3. Review your staff training and emphasize the importance of safety and company image!
4. Monitor your social media presence for bad comments and then review with your staff.
5. Maybe look at a step on guide and a driver? This definitely adds to your cost, but possibly being proactive today means you can enhance your tour experience to your customers?
6. Start some dialogue with your local transportation authority. "In your opinion with training and awareness your drivers can safely narrate while using a headset microphone".
7. Look into an automated tour system? This might be the last resort as it can kill the personal touch of private tours. Possibly use an automated system to your advantage by offering multi lingual tours?

Last words

This is a very important topic with serious business and social implications. The Distracted Driving conversation won't be going away, it will just get louder.

As a tour, limo or shuttle operator, you don't want this to be forced upon you. Avoid the sharp end of a stick, be proactive and make thoughtful changes in your operation. Prove your stewardship by lobbying your local transportation organization for the continued use of driver guides safely wearing headsets.

As a bus manufacturer, is it your position to be proactive and set your customers up for success by offering products to exceed current and future expected regulations? There are benefits to being aware of State DD regulations.

I hope this Fleet Management Best Practices sheet has helped open some dialogue within your own Ops Management team. For headset management ideas, please visit our "How Many Headsets Do I Need" sheet.

If you have any comments or questions about this topic or want more information about PA systems and microphones options, please give us a call. 1 888 724-5351

Cheers,

The Ready2Talk Team