Seven Statistics on Distracted Workers



May people think they can multitask effectively, but studies have shown that people are incapable of doing several things well simultaneously. Here are seven statistics related to distractions in the workplace.

1. Three common distractions in the workplace that may not be dangerous, but definitely cause stress and reduce productivity are: loud co-workers, people stopping by for a chat, and too many meetings that take up too much work time.
2. If you find yourself distracted and unable to focus, one thing that can help is to take a quick break outside and get some fresh air.
3. A whopping 80 percent of young drivers polled believe that texting while driving makes no difference to their driving performance. (National Highway Transportation Safety Administration)
4. An interruption of less than five seconds causes a tripling of task-related errors made by workers. (Michigan State University)
5. Reports of distracted walkers being treated at emergency rooms increased by four times over a seven-year period. (Associated Press)
6. One form of workplace distraction that many people might find surprising is poor housekeeping. Something as simple as putting a screwdriver down in a messy area and being unable to find it can cause frustration, waste time and distract workers from the jobs they are performing.
7. Two things supervisors need to do to minimize dangerous distractions are: Train workers to never approach co-workers who are performing safety-sensitive tasks until those tasks have been completed and, train operators to shut down equipment, turn power tools off and stop what they are doing before talking to another worker who approaches them.

Many people think they can multi-task effectively, but research has shown that people are incapable of doing several things well at the same time. That’s why a worker who is walking while sending a text message may walk into the path of a speeding forklift, or a worker who is cutting steel while dreaming about a weekend hunting trip may end up amputating a finger. Here are seven statistics relating to distractions in the workplace: