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## Online Classic Car Classifieds

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Newna GA 30265  
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## DRIVER SAFETY : EATING AND DRIVING



## “Eating a Meal” Tops List of Most-Common Distracting Activities

Drivers Rate Danger Level of Common Driver Distractions in Insurance Poll

They may not think it's safe, but most drivers admit to keeping one eye and one hand on a meal while driving, according to a PEMCO Insurance poll on driver distraction released in Seattle. Eating a meal turned out to be the most-common distracting activity—65 percent of drivers stated they eat while driving. Fifty-eight percent of drivers acknowledged they talk on a cell phone while driving. Drivers also thought both the activities were unsafe, along with several other common distracted driving activities. The poll of 600 respondents also asked drivers to rate the danger of the following common distracted driving activities. Drivers rated each activity on a scale from one to five, with one being “completely safe” and five being “very dangerous.”

Distracted Driving Activity	Percentage of Drivers Admitting Driving While	Average Driver Danger Rating
Eating a Meal	65%	3.8
Talking on a Cell Phone	58%	4.0
Steering with Legs and No Hands on Wheel	25%	4.7
Applying Makeup or Shaving	14%	4.6
Reading a Newspaper or Book	6%	4.9
Writing a Text Message	3%	4.8

1 = Completely Safe > 5 = Very Dangerous

“We found that when drivers eat food or call a friend, they do so despite thinking it's dangerous,” said Jon Osterberg, PEMCO Insurance spokesperson. “Our goal is to help drivers understand that when they do that, they're going against their better judgment.”

The poll showed drivers admit to other distracting activities in varying amounts, including applying makeup or shaving, reading a newspaper or book, steering with their legs and writing a text message. Drivers thought reading a newspaper or book while driving was the most dangerous distracted driving activity, with drivers rating it a 4.9 out of 5 on the danger scale. Drivers also felt that writing a text message while driving was particularly dangerous, rating it a 4.8.

Drivers handle dozens of distractions routinely, from conversations with passengers to music on the radio to roadside events. PEMCO polled drivers to learn what they perceive to be the most dangerous distractions. PEMCO will use that information in its safety-related consumer-education efforts, which include fact sheets, the Perspective customer newsletter, and the consumer tips section of pemco.com.

The poll showed a significant trend: the more drivers admitted to performing a distracting activity, the less dangerous they saw the activity. PEMCO sees danger in any type of driving distraction and encourages drivers to take responsibility for their driving habits and decide for themselves which habits are safe.

“(Use) your own common sense,” said Osterberg. “Don't fall into that ‘group mentality’ and think that eating while driving must be safe, just because you see so many people do it. Even a second or two of distraction can be dangerous. We see it all the time with rear-end collisions.”

PEMCO offers these tips for drivers tempted to eat and drive:

- If you know you'll be stopping for a quick bite on the trip, try to leave a little earlier to allow time to eat away from the car.
- If you pick up food from a drive-through, take a few extra minutes to park in the restaurant lot and eat. You'll be safer, and you'll enjoy your food more.
- If you're traveling with someone, take turns eating and driving. ■