

# Health & Safety



## The Most Common Causes Of Distracted Driving

Why do car accidents happen? There are four very general, very broad driver causation/error categories. The first one and the one that leads to the vast majority of crashes is something experts call “recognition error.” The other three driver errors categories are decision, performance, and non-performance.

The greatest driver error category is by far recognition error with a root cause of distractions. In other words, accidents that happen because drivers are trying to multitask. This causes delayed perception, reaction, and comprehension in being able to recognize hazards. It is important to recognize how dangerous this kind of behavior can be. Hundreds of thousands of people are injured every year in automobile accidents involving distracted drivers, and the numbers continue to rise. In the United States, an accident is believed to occur about every 1.25 minutes as a result of distracted driving.

What causes these distractions? Anything and everything from eating to spilling to (no joke) trying to read a book.

### The most common causes of distracted driving:

**Talking and texting.** People who use their cell phones to talk or text while driving are by far the most common reason for distracted driving accidents. In fact, the National Safety Council estimates that 26% of all car crashes involve cell phones.

**GPS.** We’ve become dependent on GPS to get us from point A to point B while driving. For many, using it doesn’t even seem like a choice anymore – it’s just what you do. But setting up a GPS route while driving is just as dangerous as texting. And even simply taking your attention from the road to glance down at the directions can lead to disaster. If you are going to use GPS, make sure it is mounted where you can easily see it... then turn up the volume anyway so that you can listen to the directions instead of having to constantly look at the screen.

**Adjusting music or controls.** Maybe you’re roasting and you need to adjust the temperature. Or your child is yelling at you from the back seat to put on music. Or the radio is just too darn loud. It may seem like a small thing to push a button or two, but it divides your attention – especially if you have to look away to do it. Small or not, it can be the difference between getting in an accident and having a smooth trip.

**Applying makeup, or grooming in general.** Sometimes you just don’t have time to look your best before you have to jump in the car. Unfortunately, many people seem to have decided that driving provides an opportunity to put on those finishing touches such as adding lipstick, combing hair, using deodorant or shaving. Not surprisingly, these activities – which take your hands off the wheel and your eyes off the road – can easily lead to accidents.

**Talking to passengers.** If you have someone riding with you in the car, it’s only natural to talk to them. In fact, you probably feel kind of rude if you don’t. But you always have to remember that paying attention to the road comes first. Turning to look at a passenger may feel like the right thing to do in the conversation, but it’s one of the worst things you can do while driving.

**Not looking at the road.** Lots of other causes tend to involve this particular action, but it’s worth looking at it by itself as well, because there are a number of different reasons why someone might take their eyes off the road. Perhaps you’re lost and looking for a landmark or address. Or there’s an accident on the side of the road and you want to know what’s going on. Maybe a rainbow appears after a thundershower and you gawk at it. None of these seem like obviously dangerous acts, but all of them make an accident more likely.

**Handling children or pets.** It’s not safe – for you or them – to drive with your pet loose in the vehicle, but that doesn’t stop quite a few people from doing it. Sadly, when pets move around your car or sit in your lap, they become distractions. And as all parents know, having children in a car can be at least as bad. They yell to get your attention. They complain that they need things. They fight. It’s all too easy to have your attention pulled from the road.

**Zoning out.** Have you ever daydreamed on a long commute or while driving a familiar route? Have you ever missed an exit? It’s pretty common. You might have even been slightly surprised to find yourself pulling into your destination, not really remembering the specific actions you took to get there. Was the route busy? Did you hit red lights? You weren’t really paying attention. Driving on “autopilot” happens too much, and it can be dangerous.

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Ardaman & Associates, Inc.

A Tetra Tech Company



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## Safe Driving at Night

Driving home after work or at night can be risky, particularly if you are tired. People think that opening car windows or listening to the radio will keep them awake; however, studies show that these methods do not work. In fact, these actions should be a red flag that fatigue has set in, and you need to pull over immediately. If you are sleepy when your shift is over, try to take a nap before driving home. Remember, sleep can quickly overcome you.

### Why is Night Driving So Dangerous?

One obvious answer is darkness. Ninety percent of a driver's reaction depends on vision, and vision is severely limited at night. Depth perception, color recognition, and peripheral vision are compromised after sundown. Older drivers have even greater difficulties seeing at night. A 50-year old driver may need twice as much light to see as a 30-year old.

Another factor adding danger to night driving is fatigue. Drowsiness makes driving more difficult by dulling concentration and slowing reaction time.

### Follow These Steps To Arrive Home Safely:

- Keep headlights, tail lights, signal lights and windows (inside and out) clean.
- Have your headlights properly aimed. Misaligned headlights blind other drivers and reduce your ability to see the road.
- Eat strategically by having protein-rich food, which encourages alertness.
- Avoid smoking and driving as smoke's nicotine and carbon monoxide hamper night vision.
- Turn your headlights on so that others can see you.
- Reduce speed and increase your following distances.
- Don't overdrive your headlights. You should be able to stop inside the illuminated area. If you cannot, you are creating a blind crash area in front of your vehicle.
- When following another vehicle, keep your headlights on low beams so you do not blind the driver ahead of you.

# Defensive Driving: Safety Walk

### Before Driving:

- ✓ Do the Safety Walk Around the Car.
- ✓ Adjust your Seat.
- ✓ Adjust Your Mirrors.
- ✓ Adjust Your Headrest.
- ✓ Adjust the steering wheel.
- ✓ Do your "Seatbelt Check!"
- ✓ Lock the doors.



Many "pull-away" or backing accidents can be prevented simply by walking around the vehicle to check for obstructions before driving away from an area. One solution is to conduct a "Walk the Circle of Safety." Experience has shown that this "walk around" procedure creates a level of awareness and alertness that has been effective in preventing accidents.

More than just backing accidents can be prevented by the "walk around." There are also many incidents of property damage caused by vehicles sideswiping low stationary objects as the driver pulls away or perhaps another driver struck your vehicle while you were away from it. This will potentially allow you to avoid the hazard or identify the other party that damage the vehicle before leaving an area. Most importantly, this practice will identify if there is anyone in the immediate area, such as another worker or a small child.

## Defensive Driving Tools

By Ryan Blumenschine

Likely the most hazardous situation that we are all exposed to in work and our daily lives is simply driving. Regardless of what our line of work is, we are susceptible to vehicle accidents whether at job sites or on public roadways. The most effective way of reducing the risk of a vehicle accident is having defensive driving skills. This is why Ardaman has adopted the Smith System defensive driving program as a part of our training curriculum. This program was implemented within the company in order to try to break any bad habits, which we all have to some extent, and create better ones.

There are three goals that the Smith System identifies in order to have a defensive drive:

**Space:** The more space you have around your vehicle during a drive, the less likely a collision could ever happen. Avoid tailgating and driving in clusters. Naturally, we all get impatient at times, but remember that aggressive driving significantly increases the risk of a collision. Many vehicle accidents occur while stopped or proceeding through intersections. At a minimum, a full car length space should be left between you and any vehicles in front of you when stopping.

**Visibility:** Ensure that you are in a position that maximizes your sight. Do your best to be able to see roughly 15 seconds ahead of you at all times. This is important so that we can prepare for possible hazards that are approaching to have an adequate reaction time. Scan your mirrors every 5-8 seconds to have constant situational awareness. Additionally, always check intersections before proceeding through your green light to watch for other drivers disregarding the right of way. Remember to use your lights, turn signals, or horn to help make yourself visible and your intentions known to other drivers as well!

**Time:** Give yourself time to react! Vehicle accidents can happen in a split second and it only takes one wrong move or mistake for one to occur. Allow for a four-second following distance between your vehicle and the vehicle in front of you. In an emergency, this will allow you to have the time you need to apply your brakes or change lanes if needed. If you ever rear-end another vehicle, you will most likely be deemed at fault due to a poor follow distance.

Remember to always choose your "lane of least resistance". This is your path of travel that allows you to follow all three goals.

Lastly, avoid complacency! Many incidents that occur in our lives, including driving related, are a result of being complacent. It's easy to get a bit overconfident in ourselves and our abilities. We may have the "it'll never happen to me because I know what I'm doing" mindset. Consider that likely every person that was at fault for a vehicle accident likely felt the same way. If the worst thing can happen, it will happen, if we are not careful!

### What are The Smith5Keys®?

1	Key 1. Aim High in Steering®	✓
2	Key 2. Get The Big Picture®	✓
3	Key 3. Keep Your Eyes Moving®	✓
4	Key 4. Leave Yourself An Out®	✓
5	Key 5. Make Sure They See You®	✓

# How to Use & Adjust Your Mirrors

Good visual search habits require proper positioning and use of mirrors located inside and outside a vehicle. Using the settings below, you can see what is directly behind your vehicle with the inside mirror, and you can see directly into spaces adjacent to each of the vehicle's rear corners by using the side mirrors. Mirrors are intended for detection and not for gathering detailed information. How can we avoid blind spots while driving?

## The inside/rearview mirror

Adjust the inside/rearview mirror so you can see the entire rear window from the driver's seat. You should have to move only your eyes, not your head, when using this mirror. Drivers 6 feet tall or taller may find it helpful to reposition the mirror upside down, if possible. This usually raises the bottom edge of the mirror about 1 to 2 inches and can substantially reduce a major blind area to the front for tall drivers.

## Side-view mirrors

To adjust the driver's side-view mirror, place your head against the left side window and set the mirror so you can just barely see the side of your car in the mirror's right side.

To adjust the passenger's side-view mirror, position your head so that it is just above the center console. Set the mirror so you can just barely see the side of your car in the left side of the mirror. If the vehicle is not equipped with remote mirror-adjustment controls, you may need assistance when properly positioning this mirror.

With these settings, you will have almost seamless visual contact around your vehicle, which can help you detect the presence of nearby drivers. For example, when being passed by a vehicle in the lane to your left, you will see it progress from the rearview mirror, to the left side mirror and then to your side vision.

Before driving with these updated mirror settings, see how they work while your vehicle is parked. For example, you can parallel park along a street, then see how passing vehicles move through your mirrors and peripheral vision. This can help you become oriented to the new settings before heading out into traffic.

Remember, even properly positioned mirrors cannot eliminate all blind spots. To reduce risk, make a final check to the sides before attempting any lateral moves.

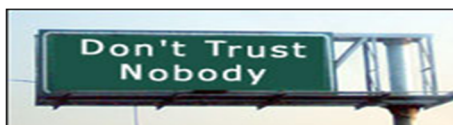
# Don't Trust Nobody

We have met the enemy and it is us. You can never rely on what the other driver will do. Think back to all the mistakes you've made while driving over the years. Think ahead to the ones you know you will make in the future. All the other drivers are just like us! Don't trust them! While you are driving, keep a wary eye on the other driver and leave yourself plenty of room. Anticipate the mistakes they might make and be ready for them. Eventually, they will! Because they are just like us! When you are driving on "autopilot," you have turned control of your vehicle over to those other drivers - you are at their mercy. Their fate is your fate.

If you are too trusting, you are relying on that other driver for your safety. Are they worthy of that trust? Every few seconds, some drivers in this country find out that this is a poor bet. Maybe some of those other drivers are returning from a beer festival! Maybe they just lost a job, or worse, a loved one. The other driver might be an 11-year-old who found Dad's keys. Approach driving with the idea that every other driver is an unpredictable menace and out to get you. Most collisions occur when the "other driver" does something we don't expect, or when we do something they don't expect.

If you accept that everyone makes driving errors, the next step is to drive with a wary attitude. Be careful of approaching red lights, because you know a light by itself never stopped anyone. Watch out for folks getting ready to pull out from parking

beside the road. Look for gaps in lines of traffic which might be the result of someone pausing to let another vehicle cross in front of them. (I've personally witnessed three or four collisions in the past ten years that happened just this way). There are others: failure to signal a lane change or turn, or tailgating someone when they are poking along because they need to make a turn—a turn they suddenly will make when they see it at the last second. You can think of dozens of others. Be alert to the possibilities and have a strategy in mind for dealing with them.



## How fast are we going @ 65 mph?

- 5280 feet in a mile
- 3600 seconds in an hour
- $65 \text{ mph} \times 5280' = 343,200 \text{ feet per hour}$
- $343,200 / 3,600 = 95.333 \text{ feet per second.}$
- At 65 mph you cover the length of a football field in just over three seconds.
- @ 4 seconds following distance you have 383 feet between your vehicle and the one in front of you. This should allow sufficient time to react and stop a vehicle safely.

## Vehicle Use Policy

Company vehicles are intended to be used for company business only. Personal use is **strictly prohibited**, unless the Branch Manager or Senior Management grants prior permission. The use of a company vehicle is restricted to the assigned driver or other Ardaman qualified drivers. Employees who are assigned vehicles must keep usage records. The employee may be held personally responsible for all damages and losses that may occur as a result of an unauthorized driver/passenger in a company vehicle or unauthorized personal use of a company vehicle. Additionally, the employee may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

### Examples of prohibited use:

- Company vehicles may not be used during non-business hours, including holidays and the weekends, unless there is a work related reason.
- Running errands, shopping, visiting friends/family, going out to eat, are examples of unauthorized use.
- Use by non-business related drivers/passengers including family members and friends are not permitted under any circumstance. A branch manager cannot approve the use of a company vehicle by a non-employee.

## Hands Free Reminder

Ardaman restricts the use of personal and business phones and other hand-held communication devices while driving, operating equipment or performing any activity where phone use can be a distraction. Unless devices can be operated with hands free accessories, employees may not place or accept a call while driving or operating equipment.

If a call must be placed or accepted without a hands-free device, drivers must stop and park the vehicle in a safe area. Texting while driving or operating equipment is strictly prohibited. Local regulations and/or client requirements may prohibit the use of cell phones under any circumstances or further restrict the use of cell phones while driving. In these cases, Ardaman personnel are to abide by the most restrictive guidance.

**Please contact your branch vehicle administrator if hands free accessories are needed.**



## How to handle a skid while driving

Skids happen when the tires lose their grip on the road. Skids can be caused by these driver errors.

- Over braking:** Braking too hard and locking up the wheels. Skids can also occur when the road is slippery.

- Over steering:** Turning the wheels more sharply than the vehicle can turn.

- Over accelerating:** Supplying too much power to drive the wheels, causing them to spin.

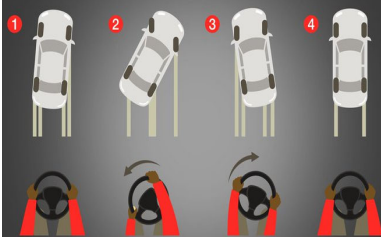
- Driving too fast:** Most serious skids result from driving too fast for road conditions. Drivers who adjust their driving to conditions do not overaccelerate and do not have to over brake or oversteer from too much speed.

One of the best ways to avoid trouble (not just skids) on the road is to drive smoothly. Plan ahead, watch carefully and slow down, especially if you are unfamiliar with the road. Most skids occur when conditions are slippery.

If you're driving and your vehicle starts to skid on the road, you should follow these steps to try and regain control of your vehicle and stay safe:

1. **Take your feet off the pedals. Don't brake, and don't accelerate.**
2. **Turn the steering wheel in the direction you want to go.**
3. **As the vehicle turns back, steer in the other direction to stop turning and return to your path of travel.**
4. **Don't jerk the steering wheel! You don't want to overcorrect. That could cause the car to fishtail.**

### DO YOU KNOW HOW TO RECOVER FROM A SKID?



## Driving Safely in the Rain

Be especially careful when the rain first starts. During the dry season, engine oil and grease from passing cars build up on roads and highways. The first rains are notorious for one thing, making the road incredibly slick as the water mixes with the motor fluid. This slick mixture reduces friction between tire and the asphalt, which is why drivers are advised to drive at a low speed. After a few hours of rainfall, the water will eventually wash away the greasy build-up.

### Slow Down

The chances of getting involved in an accident while speeding increases on wet roads and that's because wet roads aren't as effective as a dry road at helping a car come to a halt. If the forecast predicts a wet day or it's the rainy season, always leave 15-20 minutes earlier than usual to give yourself additional travel time so you won't feel the need to hurry.

### Increase Your Following Distance

Wet roads reduce friction between tire and asphalt, thereby making your vehicle take longer to come to a stop. Smith System has a normal 4 second following distance, however this will need to be increased allow enough time to identify and respond to road hazards while driving in wet weather.

### Brake Earlier And Slower

If you practice safe driving habits, you will have little need to slam on the brakes and risk getting rear-ended. When you need to slow down or stop on wet roads, go easy on the brake pedal, smoothly and earlier than you normally would. This reduces your risk of skidding off the road or into the car ahead of you.

### Turn Off Cruise Control

Driving with cruise control on wet roads could actually cause your vehicle to speed up and could hydroplane when raining, besides that, when you use cruise control, chances are you may not be as alert as you need to be.

### Avoid Big "Puddles."

Since you have no way of knowing how deep a puddle is, it is best to drive around them or take a different route if necessary. The reason is that water and electrical systems don't get along and sometimes a seemingly shallow puddle may float your vehicle.

### Turn On Your Wipers

Consider replacing your wipers at the beginning of the rainy season. Your wiper blades need to be in good condition to clear water from your screen or risk distorting your view and distracting you. Be liberal with the windscreen washer and avoid following large vehicles closely so you don't get obstructive

splash and spray on your windshield.

### Turn On Your Headlights

A few raindrops can make your car less visible to oncoming vehicles, consider turning on your headlights to help them see you in time. However, do not use high beams when it is raining to reduce distractive diffusion the rain creates. Florida and Louisiana regulations requires their use when it is raining.

### Keep An Eye Out For Pedestrians

Pedestrians taking shelter under a hoodie or umbrella during a rainstorm may have an obstructed view of the road, which means they could step into the road at the wrong time. When driving in the city or road with pedestrians, you need to be extra watchful.

### Pullover When Things Get Bad

If you can barely make out the car ahead of you because of the rain, then you need to find a safe place – away from the road – and wait for the storm to subside. Better to arrive late than never.

### Don't Brake If You Hydroplane

If your vehicle begins to hydroplane, don't panic and slam the brake or turn the steering wheel. This could worsen things and send you into a skid. Instead, slowly ease off the gas pedal and steer straight until your vehicle regains traction with the road. Tap the brake pedal slightly if you need brakes.

### Exercise Extra Caution At Intersections

Engage the brakes slow and evenly as you approach intersections. Not every driver has the proper training to handle adverse driving conditions, so don't assume you know what the other driver wants to do, it is better to anticipate their movements.

### Driving Through Water

Be very cautious where water has flooded onto the road. It is not advisable to drive through moving water if you cannot see the bottom of it.

Slowly drive through the water, if it rises above the bottom of your doors, attempting to drive through could cause electrical damage and leave you with a heavy repair bill or worse, water might get into the engine forcing you to replace it

### What To Do If You Stall In Deep Water

Do not try forcing the vehicle to start, you might hydro-lock and ruin your engine if water gets into the cylinders. If you can, get someone to help you pull out the vehicle using a tow rope or strap.

# Ardaman Update



## Injury Incidents:

- Employee was performing daily field activities at the job site. After taking several in-place field density tests using the drive sleeve method and filling three (3) five gallon buckets with soil for lab testing, they began to feel discomfort in their left elbow. The employee stopped work and immediately contacted their supervisor and reported the issue. When increased work loads are required, remember to take breaks and pace yourself to avoid overexertion. If additional help is needed, notify your supervisor. First Aid Only.

## Vehicle and Equipment Incidents:

- An Ardaman employee was working on a job site and was in the process of moving to a new section of the site. During that time, the employee and one of his co-workers noticed damage on the driver side lower door. The employee is unsure of how or when this damage occurred, but concluded that it must have happened at the hotel that they are staying at. Always perform a safety walk around your vehicle before getting into it each time. The walk allows you to recognize any potential hazards that may be present around your vehicle and allows the driver to inspect the vehicle for any damages before leaving.
- An Ardaman employee was traveling on a thru roadway approaching an intersection. While proceeding through the intersection, a third-party driver that was crossing failed to yield to the Ardaman driver and pulled out in front of them. This caused the Ardaman driver to strike the passenger side rear quarter panel of the third-party vehicle. The other driver was at fault.
- An Ardaman employee's truck was parked at their apartment complex over the weekend. A rain storm occurred and caused a tree branch to fall and land on the truck. The branch damaged the roof and third brake light on the top of the cab. When selecting parking spots, try to choose locations where overhead hazards are not present.

## Near Miss / Hazard Identification

Highlighted Near Miss/ Hazard Identifications from 28 reports received from the month of January.

- Employee was driving a 2022 F-150 equipped with cruise control and lane keeping systems. While traveling down the roadway, the vehicle's lane assist detected an old lane boundary marking and reacted. Our driver had his hand on the steering wheel and was able to continue traveling straight. Some AAI trucks have the Ford Lane-Keeping System that can assist you if driving outside of the established lanes,\* using a camera that scans lane markings on both sides of your vehicle. The system has three modes: Lane-Keeping Aid applies steering torque to direct you back to the center of the lane. Lane-Keeping Alert warns you through steering wheel vibrations that simulate driving over a rumble strip. You can set the system to activate either the Alert or Aid mode, or both. And Driver Alert sends out warnings in the message center when it detects repeated lane drifts — a reminder to pull over and take a break. \*Lane-Keeping System does not control steering.
- Employee observed a contractor excavating materials from a ditch. Haul trucks were running along the side of the ditch and there were no traffic cones, spotters, or berms in place to identify the potential struck by hazard. The contractor was notified and sent a spotter to the location and installed safety cones along the ditch to warn the haul truck drivers entering and exiting the area.

## Ardaman Safety Audits

Identified Hazards from Loss Prevention Observation/ Safety Audits conducted in the month of January.

- **Ergonomics:** Employee was lifting soil sample bags into the truck and was pivoting from their waist. Always bend with your knees and keep your back straight when lifting.



## Ardaman Health and Safety Recognition Awards

The safety committee reviewed an increased volume of submittals. We are continuing the lottery pool this month and with the increase of submittals this month, we drew two winners at random for a \$25.00 gift card.

### January Lottery Winners:

**Reza Nezami:** Houston  
**Tom Taylor:** Cocoa

A Safety Sticker was awarded to the following individuals:

- **Steven Gonzalez** for recognition and actions regarding unmarked utilities while hand augering. The employee was hand augering the location per our 811 guidelines and encountered resistance. They stopped and then hand dug the location and exposed an unmarked water line. (West Palm Beach)
- **Justin Ochs** for recognition and actions regarding an unsafe operator of a skid steer on the job site. The employee notified the safety representative for the contractor to ensure the operator was stopped. (Sarasota)
- **Tom Taylor** for recognition and actions regarding an unsafe testing location/condition. The employee notified the contractor and proper MOT was placed to ensure the work area was identified properly. (Cocoa)

# March 2024 Safety Quiz

Please circle the letter of the answer that fits best. Some answers can be found in the newsletter

**1. Which of the following are considered causes of distraction while driving?**

- A. Talking and Texting      B. Adjusting music or controls      C. Not looking at the road      D. All the above

**2. When a vehicle accident occurs, do not admit liability at the scene.**

- A. False      B. True

**3. Hands free device usage while driving means distraction free.**

- A. True      B. False

**4. When driving in the rain and a vehicle hydroplanes or skids, you should apply the brakes immediately.**

- A. True      B. False

**5. When driving at night, what precautions should be taken.**

- A. Turn you headlights on      B. Reduce Speed      C. Increase following distance      D. All the above

**6. When possible you should surround your vehicle with space.**

- A. True      B. False

**7. Which of the following is inconsistent with Smith System defensive driving?**

- A. Maintain a 4 second following distance      B. Scan mirrors every 10-12 seconds      C. Look 15 seconds ahead  
D. Leave 1 car length space in front of you when stopping.

**8. Driver performance and driving behavior is an important aspect of how others view our company.**

- A. True      B. False

**9. After reporting a vehicle accident to your supervisor and the authorities, you must exchange information with the other driver, take photos, and use the IR-C report located in your vehicle to collect and organize the information.**

- A. True      B. False

**10. When traveling on roadways, a safe following distance in dry weather is?**

- A. 2 seconds      B. 5-8 seconds      C. 4 seconds      D. All the above

**11. Before getting into a vehicle you should \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A. Perform a safety walk around the vehicle      B. Select a favorite music station      C. Adjust your mirrors  
D. All the above

**12. When backing, if you are unsure of distances to objects or your surroundings, get out and look or ask for a spotter.**

- A. True      B. False

All Ardaman employees must complete the quiz and turn it into their H&S coordinator by the end of each month. For those individuals who cannot attend the monthly safety meeting, please complete the quiz and submit it to your supervisor for approval. All completed quizzes must be submitted at a designated location at each office. The supervisor only needs to sign the quiz if you are unable to attend the monthly safety meeting. Please provide a reason for your absence in the box below:

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Employee Print Name	Employee Sign Name	Date
Supervisor Print Name	Supervisor Sign Name	Date