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Your Car As A Virtual Office

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As you ride the freeways and streets in your area, do you sense that lots of folks are unsafely using their cars and the equipment in them as "virtual offices?" Do you have a concern that that busy leaders who use their cars as a virtual office might forget about some car safety basics and end up putting themselves and others in jeopardy of serious injuries or even death? Could you be one of them?

When driving local streets and freeways, I observe an increasing number of fast and erratic driving patterns, greater numbers of one-handed drivers with cell phones glued to their ears, and drivers looking away from the road to open and close briefcases in the front seats of their cars. It appears to me that the car has become a virtual office for multitudes of busy, fast-paced business people. If this is true for you, I urge you to check out the integrity of your "office on wheels" and the integrity of how you are operating it in the interest of your own safety and the safety of others.

Has your car become your "virtual office" and also a "mobile family room" if you have a spouse and kids? If so, here are some basic tips to make your car as safe as possible by investing a little time and money before you travel.

GET A TUNE UP - For smooth traveling and overall sanity make sure your car is in good working order. It has been proven over and over again that regular maintenance is preventive maintenance. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration recommends that you have your tires, battery, belts, fluids, and air conditioner checked by a qualified mechanic regularly. If you are driving in hot climates or towing equipment you may need a motor oil with higher viscosity.

SLEEP WELL - Driving while drowsy is a contributing factor in 100,000 accidents annually according to NHTSA. Drive only when rested and switch off with another adult every few hours if possible. Stop frequently, stretch and even take a short nap if you don't have a traveling companion.

MAINTAIN AN EMERGENCY KIT - Your car emergency kit should include water, warm blanket, flashlight, jumper cables, flares, and tools to change a tire, a fully charged cell phone, and a first aid kit.

BE SUN SMART - Use sun block and sunglasses and put a sunshade in the back window if you are carrying passengers. You may also want to keep a hat or two in your trunk if you are going to be out and about the outdoors. Never leave your pets or your kids in your parked car as an 80 degree day can cause your parked car to reach deadly temperatures in seconds.

CHECK YOUR BACK SEAT

- If your car is serving as a "mobile family room", make sure child safety locks are activated on windows and doors. Also, make sure all poisonous substances such as windshield washing fluid are removed. Also, look around for loose things that can cause your kids to choke, like coins, toy parts, wrappers etc.

AVOID STORING MISSILES - When your car is traveling at 40 MPH, so is everything else in it. In case of a crash, they keep going until they hit something or someone! Store heavy items low in your seat wells so they won't become projectiles during a sudden stop or crash. For the same reason, suitcases, strollers, laptop computers, and anything else stowed in the back seat or in an open cargo area should be well secured.

USE YOUR CELL PHONE CAREFULLY - A 1997 article published in the New England Journal of Medicine linked the use of cell phones in motor vehicles to a quadrupled risk of collision. Avoid personal injury claims or lawsuits which would be based on your careless and negligent operation of your vehicle while you were distracted. Use a speaker phone and auto dial system if you must call or answer people when you are driving. Better yet, pull into a parking lot, relax and use your cell phone from there.

Remember, cell phone users who cause an accident actually provide some effective proof of the cause of the accident. Cellular phone records are so precise that it is relatively easy, during the litigation process, to obtain very detailed records of the use of the cell phone in the vehicle. These records usually contain the actual times of the calls, the other numbers called or calling, and details of the location of the phone during the call.

The cell phone usage of the careless driver can be literally tracked by the records that are generated by the cellular phone service used. This tracking can demonstrate a pattern of use and even the specific use at the time of the accident. It might even turn up an unusual witness, the other party to the cell phone conversation who heard the driver say something significant before or after the crash.

If you need help in mastering and implementing any of the skills and tactics mentioned, I'm here for you! Please visit the Call-A-Coach section of my web site for more information.

About the author:

Dr. Mac shares with business owners the practical knowledge and insights he gained as a

small company CEO. He founded Sycamore Ranch, Inc. when 27 and as CEO led his partners and a staff of 100 for 16 years in developing and operating the 50 acre recreational facility. Years later, he integrated what he learned from his Doctoral program at USC with his practical business experiences and began consulting. For four decades Mac's coached business owners in mastering and applying "how to" leadership and managerial skills for: Hiring and retaining only the top ten percent producers; Optimally deploying and supervising staff to maximize their personal motivation; Developing high integrity leadership teams; Facilitating mutual performance accountability and peer coaching processes; and, Integrating his Intentional Business Integrity Process into their company operations. Mac has served leaders in manufacturing and high tech companies; accounting, banking and insurance enterprises; medical and health care organizations; service and retail oriented businesses; as well as educational, governmental and non profit organizations. Q&A ProActive Leadership 888-648-5552 or MacAdam@PALConsulting

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