



CHAPTER 01 – DISTRACTION

Introduction

Distraction means that something is asking for your attention, causing you to have less attention for the task you are executing. Often we label this as ‘multi-tasking’, which is actually just a term for ‘spreading your attention’. This means you are not completely focused on the task.

Distraction is everywhere around us. For example, a phone, the tv, messages on social media, app messages or sending an email during navigation can be a big distraction. Usually we manage this well, but danger lies when we are not alert in our activities or surroundings. This can have severe consequences on the safety.

Practical example

You quickly want to send an email during navigation. You look around you before you head over to the computer. You shift your attention towards your emails and are not aware of what is happening outside. The ship is going off course, but this is not noticed. Then you look up from your computer and you are making your way towards a moored barge. You try to correct the course, but unfortunately, a collision takes place.

Instruction

Make sure distractions are minimized. For example, turn your phone on ‘silent’. You will not be distracted by incoming messages, but can check your phone at a more appropriate time later when you have full attention for the messages and responses. Your attention will stay with the activity and no unnecessary stress signals will disturb you.

When something happens that is asking for your attention, then determine whether the distraction is something urgent and important. For example, when an alarm goes off, it is important to respond. An incoming email however, is a distraction which can cause for a dangerous situation.

If the distraction is important, like in the case of an emergency, then make sure that the current task is completed in such a way, that you can finish later or is delegated to someone else.

Also do not distract others, address each other when they get distracted, and help each other by taking over their tasks when necessary.

