

Transport Safety Pack

DISTRACTIONS CAN KILL – SAFETY GUIDE

Mobile telephones, CBs, radios, dispatch systems, GPS and other technology are all important equipment for most of us today.

However, a USA study of truck crashes revealed that in 28% of crashes the truck driver was either not paying proper attention, was distracted by something inside or outside the vehicle, or failed to adequately observe the situation.

When you are driving in a situation that demands your absolute attention and concentration, performing another task like talking on a phone or CB can affect your driving. Driving with a mobile phone or microphone in your hand seriously impacts on your ability to control the vehicle, especially if you need to take action quickly to avoid a crash.

The message is simple – distractions can kill.

Where?

Distraction can reduce your driving performance at any time but there are several common situations where distractions can cause serious problems for the driver and other road users. These include:

- ∞ Complex traffic situations (e.g. at intersections, during peak hour, or where there is a hazard such as road works)
- ∞ Complex driving situations (e.g. when overtaking or turning)
- ∞ Difficult stretches of road (e.g. winding roads or narrow roads)
- ∞ Poor weather conditions (e.g. rain or fog reducing visibility, high winds making it harder to steer).

The Risk

The risk of being involved in a serious crash can increase by four times while using a mobile phone.

What can you do about this alarming fact? You can eliminate the risk of having a crash by:

- ∞ When it's safe to do so, pull off the road
- ∞ Arrange to ring the caller back at a time when you are not driving (besides being safer, you will be able to give the phone call your full attention).

- ∞ Turning off the phone when driving.

The Law

In Victoria, it is illegal not to be fully in control of a vehicle or to use a hand held telephone when driving.

Your employer has a legal ‘duty of care’ to ensure your safety in the “workplace” (this includes vehicles used for work). Most organisations have guidelines that encourage safe use of mobile phones and other technology. Ensure that you are familiar with your organisation’s policy.

Your employer can help by:

- ∞ Considering the safety impacts of installing communication devices
- ∞ Encouraging staff to pull off the road to take calls or use other equipment
- ∞ Only making calls when staff members are unlikely to be driving
- ∞ Banning the use of mobile phones and other communication devices when driving

Further information

Visit www.vicroads.vic.gov.au and www.arrivealive.vic.gov.au

This safety guide has been produced by the Transport Industry Safety Group with the support of VicRoads to improve the safety of transport workers. It is one of 18 Safety Guides and other important information including the TISG’s ‘A Guide to Occupational Health and Safety Transport Industry’ that can be downloaded from www.vta.com.au



Proudly supported by VicRoads