

Transport Safety Pack

DRUGS AND DRIVING – SAFETY GUIDE

Drugs contribute to driver deaths as often as alcohol. In recent Random On-Road Drug Tests conducted by the Victoria Police, and around 1 out of 70 truck drivers tested positive to amphetamines and THC the active ingredient of cannabis.

Since 2004, Victoria Police have been conducting roadside saliva testing to detect the presence of THC (the active ingredient of Cannabis) and amphetamines. New laws are now in place that also provide for testing for Ecstasy.

Impairing drugs are detected in more than 30 per cent of drivers killed.

Why?

Drugs can affect your capacity to drive a vehicle safely by impairing mental functions, increasing risk taking, and reducing attention and concentration on the driving task. Drugs can also affect your physical ability to drive a vehicle safely. These effects can happen even when outward signs of impairment are not readily observable.

The long term effects of cannabis, amphetamines and many other common illegal drugs include:

- ∞ Respiratory problems
- ∞ Heightened risk of infections
- ∞ Memory loss
- ∞ Aggression
- ∞ Psychotic behaviour
- ∞ Heart and brain damage.

What are the Risks?

Research shows that drivers who have recently used cannabis are at the same risk of having a road crash as having an alcohol concentration of 0.15 (3 times the legal limit).

Research on heavy vehicle drivers, who test positive to stimulants (amphetamines), shows that they are at the same risk as a person with an alcohol concentration of 0.10 to 0.15.

Like alcohol, drugs reduce your ability to operate any piece of machinery safely, particularly if more than one drug is used, or if drugs are mixed with alcohol.

Both prescription and over-the-counter medicines (i.e. medicines you can buy from the pharmacist without a prescription) can impair driving ability. This includes medicines

used to treat common conditions like allergies, arthritis, diabetes, blood pressure, stress, and strong pain killers (particularly those containing codeine).

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



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