

In Vehicle Distraction Management

Introduction

Driving a vehicle safely in a fast moving and dynamic environment takes a large amount of concentration by the driver. Anything that distracts the driver to lose their concentration on the road ahead, even for just a few seconds, can have disastrous consequences that puts their life and those of the public at risk. Drivers need to be aware that relatively common actions can cause a distraction and lead to an incident while management need policies, procedures and training in place to recognise these risks and mitigate them.

Scope

This Safety Information provides an overview of the types of potential in vehicle distractions and steps that can be taken to reduce them to improve the transport safety performance of gas company and their contractors' delivery vehicles, for the transportation of industrial and medical gases.

This TSI focuses on distractions in the vehicle that are within the driver's direct control. Distractions outside the vehicle that takes the driver's attention away from the road ahead, for example an incident on the other side of the road, should not be forgotten.

Definitions

Distraction – something that prevents someone from concentrating on a task.

In-vehicle communications device – any device that facilitates two-way communication.

OBC – onboard computer.

Sat-Nav – satellite navigation.

Entertainment system – includes radios and digital media.

Learning more about vehicle data management

1. Do your drivers recognise which of their actions could be distracting them from driving?
2. Do you train your drivers in the different types of distraction?
3. Do you train your drivers in recognising which actions could be distracting?
4. Do you communicate the possible fatal consequences of being distracted?
5. Do you review your practices ensuring they do not increase the risk of the driver being distracted?
6. Do you have policies in place to ensure equipment is not used while driving that could be distracting?

If the answer to any of the above questions is 'no', then you should consider taking action!

THIS TRANSPORT SAFETY INFORMATION GIVES GUIDANCE ON THE TYPES OF DISTRACTION AND ACTIONS THAT WILL HELP TO IMPROVE SAFETY IN ROAD TRANSPORT.

Categories of distractions

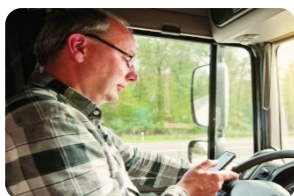
There are 3 main categories of distraction:



Visual – A visual distraction is one that makes the driver take their eyes off the road ahead



Manual or mechanical – A manual distraction is one that makes the driver take their hands off the steering wheel



Cognitive – A cognitive distraction is anything that takes the drivers mind off driving

Any action that a driver takes that can lead to one of these types of distraction increases the risk of being involved in an incident.

A distraction does not always fall solely into one of these categories and can be a combination of two or more. For example, texting while driving means the driver has to look away from the road, take their hand off the wheel to operate the phone and concentrate on reading or keying the message. Therefore, texting while driving means the driver experiences visual, manual and cognitive distraction. When an act results in multiple types of distraction, it significantly increases the risk and the likelihood that an incident will occur.

Distractions can significantly affect:

- visual search patterns;
- hazard perceptions;
- reaction times;
- decision making processes;
- ability to maintain speed, throttle control; and
- road positioning.

Management responsibilities

Management has the responsibility to mitigate the risk of distraction wherever possible and communicate to the driver population the potential of an incident from the remaining risk. While certain actions are deemed illegal in many geographies, for example, use of handheld mobile phones, not all distraction risks are specifically covered. Therefore, gases companies cannot solely rely on legal definitions to reduce the risk of distractions within their distribution fleets.