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Services to the Onshore Natural Gas Industry

Safe Driving Policy

Wilcock Consultants recognises the importance of the health, safety and welfare of its workers and seeks to maintain a safe, healthy and productive working environment, including work related road safety for all employees, consultants, sub-contractors, clients and visitors involved with its operations. As part of our overall health and safety policy Wilcocks is committed to reducing the risks which our workers face and create when driving or riding for work. We ask all our workers to play their part, whether they use a company vehicle, their own or a hire vehicle.

1.0 Mobile Phones

A substantial body of research shows that using a hand-held or hands-free mobile phone while driving is a significant distraction, and substantially increases the risk of the driver crashing. You should not make or receive calls, send or read texts or emails or otherwise use a mobile phone, whether hand-held or handsfree, while driving. Persistent failure to do so will be regarded as a serious matter.

Drivers who use a mobile phone, whether hand-held or hands-free:

- are much less aware of what's happening on the road around them
- fail to see road signs
- fail to maintain proper lane position and steady speed
- are more likely to 'tailgate' the vehicle in front
- react more slowly, take longer to brake and longer to stop • are more likely to enter unsafe gaps in traffic
- feel more stressed and frustrated.

Using a hands-free phone while driving does not significantly reduce the risks because the problems are caused mainly by the mental distraction and divided attention of taking part in a phone conversation at the same time as driving.

1.1 The Law

"**The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) (Amendment) (No. 4) Regulations 2003**", came into force to prohibit drivers using a hand-held mobile phone, or similar device, while driving. It also made it an offence to "cause or permit" a driver to use a hand-held mobile phone while driving, or to use a hand-held mobile

phone while supervising a driver who only has a provisional licence. Penalties can include a fine and / or points added to your licence.

1.2 The definition of a hand-held mobile phone

The Regulation includes any “device, other than a two-way radio, which performs an interactive communication function by transmitting and receiving data”. It states that a “mobile telephone or other device is to be treated as hand-held if it is, or must be, held at some point during the course of making or receiving a call or performing any other interactive communication function”. "interactive communication function" this includes: sending or receiving oral or written messages; sending or receiving still or moving images; and providing access to the internet.

Two exemptions are 2- way “press to talk” radios, such as used by the emergency services and taxi drivers and using a hand-held phone for a genuine emergency call to 999 or 112 if it would be unsafe for the driver to stop.

1.3 The Definition of Driving

Under existing law a person may be regarded as "driving" a vehicle while the engine is running and the vehicle is stationary. The offence applies to all motor vehicles, including motorcycles.

1.4 Hands-Free Mobile Phones

This law does not ban the use of hands-free mobile phones. However drivers should note that the existing law requiring drivers to be in proper control of their vehicle, or careless or dangerous driving laws can be applied to driving while using a hands-free phone, if the police believe the nature of the driving warrants it.

Workers who drive for work must:

- never use a hand-held or hands-free phone while driving
- plan journeys so they include rest stops when messages can be checked and calls returned
- ensure their phone is switched off and can take messages while they are driving, or allow a passenger to use the phone
- co-operate with monitoring, reporting and investigation procedures

2.0 Driver Distraction

A driver is distracted when they pay attention to a second activity while driving. People cannot always safely multi-task in this way, especially if the second activity is time consuming or complex. The second activity puts extra demands on the driver, which may reduce his or her driving standard. For example, it may cause the driver to become less observant or to make worse decisions about how to control the vehicle safely. This lower standard of driving means that a driver is more likely to fail to anticipate hazards, and means accidents can occur due to the distraction. In theory, there are as many potential causes of distraction as there are things to which drivers could pay attention. In reality, however, drivers tend to prioritise information so that they pay the most attention to information or activities needed for driving.

Distraction can be either driver initiated (where the driver starts carrying out a distracting activity) or nondriver initiated (the unpredictable actions of something or someone else). Objects, events, or activities both inside and outside the vehicle can cause distraction. In-vehicle distractions can be caused by technology, or by other sources inside the vehicle such as passengers. External distractions may be when a driver concentrates on unimportant events or objects, or when another person does something unusual.

2.1 Potential Distractions

- Talking on a mobile phone / answering a mobile phone / dialling on a mobile phone
- Preparing to eat or drink
- Eating / drinking / spilling
- Manipulating music / audio controls
- Smoking
- Reading or writing
- Grooming
- Baby distracting / child distracting / adult distracting
- Conversing
- Reaching / leaning etc
- Manipulating vehicle controls
- External Distraction

2.2 Effects of Distraction

Distracted drivers underestimate the effects that distraction has on them, and do not perceive their reduced awareness or their ability to spot hazards. This may be because they are still looking at the road straight ahead and are not gathering the whole picture of the road around the vehicle.

Drivers who are distracted also have difficulty controlling their speed and their distance from the vehicle in front, and their lane position can vary drastically.

The more complex or involved a driver becomes with a distraction, the more detrimental the distraction is on their ability to make observations and control the vehicle safely.

2.3 The Law

There are general laws that require drivers to be attentive and not engage in distracting activities. Distracted drivers could be charged with a range of offences, Dangerous Driving, Careless and Inconsiderate Driving, Failure to Be In Proper Control of the Vehicle, or Driving Without Due Care and Attention depending on how badly the distraction affected their driving.

2.4 Dealing with Distraction

Distraction is a difficult risk to manage. On the one hand, some level of distraction is unavoidable, but drivers can take some simple steps to avoid becoming distracted.

If you need to do something distracting, find a safe place to pull over. You can prevent yourself from doing distracting things behind the wheel by finding a safe place to pull over first. By planning so that you are not

trying to drive and do other tasks at the same time, you can reduce the likelihood of becoming distracted in the vehicle.

Many drivers sometimes carry out a distracting activity, without realise the extra risk that it causes. Eating or changing a CD are examples of activities that drivers may do without thinking of the risks involved. Before engaging in an activity, ask yourself "will this be distracting". Think about how you would feel if you saw another road user doing the same thing - self-assessment is an important part of safe driving.

In-Vehicle technology can be distracting, especially if there are several systems in the same vehicle. Never put too many different devices in a vehicle. If you can change the settings on the technology, then find ways of using it that is less distracting.

All drivers dedicate a certain amount of time to navigating, this is unavoidable, but there are things you can do to reduce the time you spend navigating. By planning your route in advance and making sure you have a good idea of the directions, you may be able to reduce the time you spend looking for signs and road markings, and plan manoeuvres earlier.

3.0 Winter Driving Safety

Driving in the winter is very different than at other times of the year. Adverse weather and longer periods of darkness (especially after the clocks go back at the end of October) make driving more hazardous. Sometimes conditions can be extreme with prolonged periods of heavy snow and floods.

Different weather conditions create different hazards throughout the winter and in different areas of the country at different times. A single journey may involve very different weather, road and traffic conditions.

Most people have very little experience driving in extreme conditions, such as snow, so please consider how it affects your driving. Don't just drive as normal and in very bad conditions, avoid driving completely, unless you absolutely have to make the journey and driving is the only option.

The central question about winter driving is, do you have to travel? When conditions are not so bad as to prevent travel entirely, there are various aspects of journey planning that enable trips to be undertaken more safely. Every journey should be managed and those responsible for winter journey planning should take into account road type, hazards, traffic densities, and high-risk features such as steep hills.

Changes in the weather should be considered as part of the journey-planning process. Heeding Police advice and being situationally aware should be part of the risk assessment process. Severe weather not only disrupts the Transport Network, but it also impacts the economy, creates the potential for reputational damage for businesses and governments, and can impact people, their families, and communities where lives are lost and members of the public are injured.

It is also crucial that journey scheduling allows time for sufficient rest stops, for you to take account of reasonably foreseeable weather and traffic conditions, and to comply with speed limits. Good practice is to build time into a journey, which means you will be less likely to rush in order to make up for any delays. It is conceivable that journey routes and scheduling might need to be altered during the winter months.

Winter driving tips can be found on the following website using this link:

https://www.rac.co.uk/drive/advice/winter-driving



Graham Wilcock, Managing Director
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