

Reducing road user distraction

Activities have been adapted from *Limiting Risks, Protecting Lives* (NSW Centre for Road Safety).

Crossroads outcomes

- 1.2 Critically analyse situations, attitudes and behaviours that influence health, safety and wellbeing in different contexts.
- 2.1 Formulate and reflect on strategies and personal actions that enhance health, safety and wellbeing relevant to their current situation.
- 2.2 Recognise and respond appropriately to situations which may be harmful to self and others.
- 2.3 Evaluate the skills and actions that could be used in various situations which promote the health, safety and wellbeing of self and others.
- 5.1 Plan for challenging and changing situations and understand the benefits of adapting to current and future challenges.

Crossroads content

What do we want students to know, understand or be able to do?

Safe Travel – Owning Yourself

Travelling safely locally and overseas

- Safe travel
 - planning for safe travel
 - protective behaviours
 - strategies to minimise harm to self and others
- Challenging personal attitudes and behaviours as increasingly independent road users
 - rights and responsibilities as a passenger
 - rights and responsibilities as a driver
 - assertiveness as a driver and passenger
 - deep analysis of the ripple effect

Safe Travel – Responding to Others

Safe road use

- Responsible behaviour for road users
 - road user distraction
- Making safe decisions as road and transport users
 - assertive behaviours as drivers and passengers in various real life contexts
 - minimising distractions when driving, walking and as a passenger.

- Students undertake active research in order to determine how prevalent distractions are.
- Students identify the major causes of distraction for road users.
- Students acknowledge that distractions are a significant risk to being safe when using the road environment, for self and others.
- Students demonstrate an understanding of the importance of staying focused while driving a vehicle.
- Students develop a proactive list of ways they can minimise distractions for themselves and other drivers.

Teaching notes

Recent research suggests that at least 14% of all crashes involve the driver being distracted by something inside or outside the vehicle (NSW Roads and Maritime). Distractions can take many forms; using mobile phones and GPS units, adjusting vehicle settings, unsettled and noisy passengers, eating, drinking, smoking, and external distractions.

This activity challenges students to consider the importance of minimising and eliminating distractions as a road user, and the ways in which they can protect themselves and others from harm.

Where appropriate use students personal anecdotes to generate discussion on distractions being a significant risk factor for drivers and other road users.

Resources/materials that need pre-preparation

- Driver distraction fact card sheet (Appendix 1) – printed and cut into 5 individual facts.

Activity 1 – What is driver distraction?

- Class discussion:
 - How would you describe a driver distraction?
 - What are some of your observations or experiences with driver distraction?
 - How often have you seen drivers using their mobile phone while driving?
 - Should the focus only be on hand held devices? Why or why not?
- In small groups, students list their top 5 driver distractions. Compare the brainstormed list to the report in *GEARED*.
http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/geared/your_driving_skills/staying_safe/driven_to_distraction.html
 Students justify their list in comparison to the list on *GEARED*.
- Groups categorise their own list and the *GEARED* list into four types of driver distractions:
 - Physical distractions
 - Visual distractions
 - Auditory distraction
 - Cognitive distractions
- Discuss:
 - Why do some distractions fit into more than one category?
 - In what ways could some distractions be more dangerous than others?
 - Select three distractions and describe strategies that you could use to minimise the risks for you or your friends?

Activity 2 - Get the facts: Driver distraction

- In small groups, students read and review the information on the *Get the facts: Driver distraction* cards (Appendix 1). Discussion is based around the following:
 - Why do you think driver distraction is a worldwide concern?
 - What responsibilities do you have as a driver and a passenger in relation to distraction?
 - What responsibilities do you think governments have in relation to driver distraction?

Activity 3 – Managing distractions

The following activity is designed to allow students to experience the challenges of operating a car while being actively distracted by a number of different sources.

- Ask for volunteers for the following roles:
 - driver
 - driving instructor
 - hazard provider
 - recorder.
- Set up five chairs to represent a car.
- Roles:
 - **Driver** – carry out the act of driving, including changing gears, steering, turning the steering wheel, using the break, accelerator and clutch.
 - **Driver instructor** – tell the driver how to get to your house from here. Give them specific instructions, e.g. turn left, right at the round about.
 - **Hazard provider** – in a loud voice, tell the driver about your day and everything you have learnt so far this week in all of your subjects. If you run out of topics, tell the driver all about your family.
 - **Recorder** – record a tick every time the driver demonstrates good driving action. Record a cross each time they look distracted, fail to indicate, take their hands off the wheel.
- Allow students to carry out the scenario for as long as they can. If time allows, give other students the opportunity to perform each of the roles.
- Discuss:
 - How well did the driver cope with the distractions? (ask the recorder to provide feedback)
 - Is this a realistic driving situation? Why or why not?
 - What makes it difficult to drive the car well in this scenario?
 - What is the responsibility of the driver in this scenario?
 - In pairs, students discuss and list strategies how the distractions in the scenario could be managed.

Activity 4 – Promoting safe behaviours

- Show one of the Sydney Swans *Get Your Hand Off It* advertisements from the Centre for Road Safety <http://roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/campaigns/sponsorships/sydneyswans.html>
- Discuss:
 - Who is the intended audience of this clip? How do you know?
 - Is this an effective strategy for young people? Why or why not?
 - In what other travel situations could it be dangerous to use a mobile phone?
- Watch the Centre for Road Safety's animated video showing the rules and laws around mobile phone use: <http://roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/stayingsafe/mobilephones/index.html>
 - Who is the intended audience for this clip?
 - Were you surprised by any of these rules? Why or why not?
 - In what situations could this clip be used? Who should it be shown to and why?
- Students work in small groups to brainstorm ways they can avoid distractions for each type of road user. Encourage groups to think broader than just not distracting the driver.
 - driver
 - car passenger
 - cyclist
 - skateboarder
 - city pedestrian
 - bus passenger



Get the facts: Driver distraction

Card 1 - Get the facts: Driver distraction

Driving Distractions and Crash Risk – Roads & Maritime (NSW)

<http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/roads/safety-rules/safe-driving/driving-distractions.html>

- At least 14 per cent of all crashes involve the driver being distracted by something inside or outside the vehicle.
- As many as 1 in 10 fatalities have been directly attributed to driver distraction.
- Even though surveys have shown that 98% of people believe that using a mobile phone while driving, is very dangerous, 28% of people admit to doing it themselves.

Card 2 - Get the facts: Driver distraction

Driver Distraction Fact Sheet - Office of Road Safety (WA)

<http://www.ors.wa.gov.au/Documents/Distractions/ors-distractions-fact-sheet.aspx>

- It has been estimated that distraction played a role in 32% of all road crash deaths and serious injuries in Western Australia between 2005 and 2007.
- Results of a recent study of serious crashes in Perth found that one-third of all the crashes studied involved a distracting activity.
- Approximately one-third of all distractions appear to be outside-the-vehicle distractions.
- Between 15%-20% of all distractions appear to involve driver interaction with technology.

Card 3 - Get the facts: Driver distraction

Mobile Phones – Young Driver Factbase

<http://www.youngdriverfactbase.com/the-issues/restrictions2/>

- Hand-held mobile phone use while driving is banned in all states of Australia.
- Research has shown, whether in hand-held mode or in hands-free mode, mobile phone use increases reaction times, speeding and attention lapses, as well as the risk of crashing.
- The risk of crashing increases four-fold, while the risk of driver death is between 4-9 times higher than when not using a phone.
- In Australia, 9% of young drivers reported using a mobile phone in their most recent car journey.
- In this study, compared to older drivers, young drivers rated distracting activities such as mobile phone use as significantly less risky.
- Other reports find only 28% of young drivers view using a mobile while driving as hazardous, which suggests many young drivers might not comply with a ban on use if introduced.

Card 4 - Get the facts: Driver distraction

Mobile phone use: A growing problem of driver distraction – WHO factsheet

http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/publications/road_traffic/distracted_driving_summary.pdf?ua=1

- There are many types of distractions that can lead to impaired driving. There has been a marked increase around the world in the use of mobile phones by drivers.
- The distraction caused by mobile phones can impair driving performance in a number of ways, e.g. longer reaction times (notably braking reaction time, but also reaction to traffic signals), impaired ability to keep in the correct lane, and shorter following distances.
- Text messaging also results in considerably reduced driving performance, with young drivers at particular risk of the effects of distraction resulting from this use.