

Safety Alert



SA. No. 2011-01

NOTICE TO ACCREDITED RAIL OPERATORS

Subject

Restrictions on the use of distracting electronic devices including mobile telephones

Issue

Transport Safety Victoria has become aware that effective 28 March 2011, the United States Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) (www.fra.dot.gov) amended its railroad communications regulations by restricting the use of mobile telephones and other potentially distracting electronic devices by railroad operating employees, as posted in the Federal Register - <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/pdf/2010-23916.pdf>.

This change to the FRA regulations aims to address serious concerns about potential safety issues arising from the use of mobile telephones and other devices by rail employees during operations, even when procedures are in place that restrict their use.

Use of mobile phones and other electronic devices may affect a rail safety workers' ability to carry out safety critical work and could lead to loss of situational awareness, failure to detect hazards and critical information, increased mental workload, and errors. TSV has released an earlier Safety Alert on driver distraction - [SAA No. 2008-09](#).

Following the recognition of the risk associated with the use of mobile telephones and other electronic devices, it is suggested that operators consider reviewing:

- risk registers with regard to the risks associated with distraction, for drivers and other rail safety workers,
- existing controls for these risks, for example, procedures controlling the use of electronic devices, and
- their approach to monitoring and enforcing these controls.

In order to ensure compliance with safety duties set out in the *Rail Safety Act 2006* (Vic), the following should be undertaken:

- Organisations should note this advice and take appropriate action.

For further information in Victoria, contact Elizabeth Grey, Manager Human Factors on (03) 9655 6892.

THIS ADVICE IS EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY

Approved:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris McKeown".

CHRIS McKEOWN
Director, Rail Safety

Date:
7 June 2011