

DRIVING AND DISTRACTIONS

What happened?

An employee is driving from site to the depot when his phone starts to ring. On impulse, the employee searches for his phone to identify the caller so he can decide if the call requires immediate attention. As the employee looks back up, the vehicle is headed to a bend in the road, towards a wooden barrier. Before the employee could take evasive measures, the vehicle makes contact with the barrier.

- Panel damage to the left-side of the vehicle
- No damage to the barrier
- No injury to employee
- Drug and alcohol test is carried out (negative result)



Road barrier on side of the road – Source: Google Maps
Vehicle damage – Courtesy of the employee

What did we learn?

- Employee was on standby / fault response, prioritising phone calls. The employee's intention was to identify the caller, not answer the phone. Data was extracted from EROAD, the vehicle speed was travelling appropriately.
- The employee worked normal hours; fatigue was not a contributing factor.

For discussion

- Pull over and stop in a safe area if you need to look at your phone or locate anything in your vehicle.
- **DN-ZH-ST049 Vehicles and Driving**
 - Switch off mobile phones while driving. If this is not reasonably practicable –
 - Use hands-free kit if available.
 - Never operate a vehicle while using a handheld mobile device.
- Anything that diverts a driver's attention for more than two seconds can significantly increase the likelihood of a crash or near-crash.

Source: Waka Kotahi

Alert

Health **Safety** Environment 11.10.2023



Review these questions with your team at your next pre-start meeting.

Stand
in the
Gap

Would this initiative be useful in your area?

What would you need to do to implement it?

How can you 'Stand in the Gap'?

Further information

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