

Media Release

The Hon Lisa Neville MP

Minister for the Coordination of Environment, Land, Water, and Planning – COVID-19
Minister for Police and Emergency Services
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MOBILE PHONE CAMERA TRIAL TO MAKE VICTORIAN ROADS SAFER

A three-month trial of state-of-the-art safety cameras that will capture distracted drivers on Victoria's roads will start next week throughout the state.

The technology is designed to detect mobile phone use behind the wheel and potentially other illegal driving activities, making our roads safer for the majority of road users who do the right thing.

The trial – which begins this Wednesday, 29 July – will ensure the technology operates accurately and is appropriate for use on Victorian roads before a potential rollout.

Research shows drivers who use a mobile phone while driving are four times more likely to cause a fatal road accident. Texting, browsing and emailing increase the crash risk even further – up to ten times.

In 2017-18, more than 30,000 motorists were issued with fines for using a mobile phone while driving in Victoria. Drivers and riders involved in distraction-related crashes may make up at least 11 per cent of road fatalities.

As well as capturing drivers illegally using their mobile phones while driving, the cameras will be tested for possible future use to crack down on other dangerous driver behaviour on Victorian roads, including not wearing a seatbelt.

No infringements will be issued during the pilot and number plate matching will not be undertaken. All photographs captured will be deleted, except for a limited number of de-identified images.

The trial will help understand how the technology can be integrated with the existing road safety camera systems and ensure the cameras operate effectively and accurately, so fines issued under a full rollout are appropriate.

If introduced to Victorian roads, the technology will be able to operate from any location, 24 hours a day, in all conditions, meaning drivers who choose to do the wrong thing will be caught out.

Research conducted by the Monash University Accident Research Centre estimated an automated mobile phone enforcement camera program could prevent 95 casualty crashes per year and save taxpayers \$21 million annually.

The cameras allow high-resolution images to be captured in all conditions, regardless of weather and light levels, and for those images to be reviewed in real time to detect potential offences.

Testing will focus on a relocatable version of the technology across several metropolitan and regional locations and will be conducted by the technology provider, Acusensus, and the current traffic camera services contractor.

The government provided more than \$120 million dollars in the *Victorian Budget 2019/20* to increase mobile camera enforcement by 75 per cent over the coming years and investigate new road safety camera capabilities.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Police and Emergency Services Lisa Neville

"We know distracted drivers can have devastating outcomes on our roads – this technology is another step towards targeting this kind of unacceptable behaviour and keeping all road users safe."

"We all have a role to play in reducing our road toll – every time someone picks up their phone behind the wheel they are putting lives in danger. This technology will detect those who choose to put lives at risk on our roads."

Quote attributable to Minister for Roads and Road Safety Ben Carroll

"We know how dangerous it is to use your phone while driving – that's why we're trialing this new technology to help stamp out this irresponsible behaviour."

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