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FOREWORD

VicRoads is committed to providing a safe working environment for employees and acknowledges that driving and car travel presents higher risks for employees. Road crashes are the most common cause of work related deaths in Australia. This policy aims to reduce injuries and death on our roads and to further improve road safety, particularly from a standard vehicle fleet safety perspective.

The policy and its requirements are based on experience, expert road safety knowledge and regular reviews of technological improvements in the automotive industry. All employees, contractors and agency staff are encouraged to continue to exemplify the road safety message by implementing this policy and its expected behaviours when driving VicRoads vehicles.

1. SAFER VEHICLES

VicRoads will acquire fleet passenger cars having safety standards that exceed the Australian Design Rules. These increased safety standards will provide enhanced protection for VicRoads drivers and passengers.

The mandatory requirements for VicRoads passenger vehicles include:

- At least a four star safety rating in the Australasian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP);
- ABS braking;
- electronic stability control (ESC);
- driver and passenger airbags;
- side-curtain airbags;
- daytime running lights (excluding some hybrid vehicles where these cannot be fitted);
- over-speed warning device;
- centre rear lap sash seat belt;
- cargo barriers in wagons; and
- first aid kits.

The following safety features will be included in all VicRoads passenger vehicles where available and meeting business operational requirements:

- reverse collision warning systems.
- Intelligent speed assist.

Bull-bars are not permitted to be fitted to passenger vehicles, without the written approval of the Chief Executive.

Where possible, VicRoads will aim to choose the safest vehicle when choosing between otherwise similar makes and models.

2. SAFE USE OF VEHICLES

2.1 Pre-Drive Checks

VicRoads employees shall ensure that any vehicle they drive is in a safe condition before starting the trip. The following actions should be carried out:

- ensure there is enough fuel to get to the destination;
- check the condition of tyres;
- ensure windows and mirrors are clean and properly adjusted and that the windscreen washer reservoir has sufficient liquid;
- test lights to make sure they are all working; and
- check oil (gauge and dipstick indicate pressure and level) and radiator fluid (only check if engine is cold).

Drivers must notify the person responsible for vehicle maintenance if the vehicle is suspected to be unsafe.

In vehicles where daytime running lights cannot be fitted, drivers are encouraged to turn their headlights on to low beam whenever they drive.

2.2 Instruction on Hybrid Vehicle Operation

Hybrid vehicles combine a petrol engine with an electric motor and battery and as such, some of the controls are different from conventional vehicles. For example, hybrid vehicles may have:

- different ignition/starting systems;
- a foot pedal parking brake; and
- centrally-mounted electronic instrument display panel including navigation system.

and are much quieter than normal cars.

Despite written operating instructions being available, VicRoads employees should receive personal instruction on the operation of hybrid vehicles from Business Area vehicle coordinators before driving them for the first time.

2.3 Loose Items

Loose items which could cause harm to occupants in any situation, including a crash, should not be carried in the interior. If items are required to be carried in the interior, they should be fastened securely. For example, items should not be placed on rear parcel shelves, and brief cases, boxes etc. should be placed in the boot where possible.

2.4 Fatigue

VicRoads employees should be aware they are at a higher risk of a crash when suffering from symptoms of fatigue and have a responsibility not to drive a vehicle.

There are various actions that can be undertaken by drivers to ensure they do not place themselves, passengers or other road users at risk. These can include:

- planning your trip so that regular breaks are taken every two hours or before as required;
- avoiding driving at times when you would normally be asleep or after 16 hours since your

last sleep;

- where possible, making arrangements to share the driving with other VicRoads employees;
- taking powernaps (a nap of 10 minutes or more). Powernaps are effective in reducing the risk of crashes caused by fatigue; and
- being aware of factors that can affect fatigue and planning the trip to minimise the risk associated with these factors. This may include planning an overnight stay.

Managers and supervisors should avoid unreasonably tight schedules when planning meetings. The scheduling of these meetings should take into consideration travel requirements of attendees.

2.5 Alcohol and driving

Employees have a legal responsibility not to drive while under the influence of alcohol and should ensure that their blood alcohol concentration (BAC) is below .05 at all times when in charge of a vehicle. While the legal limit for fully licensed drivers is below .05 BAC, even lower levels have been found to influence driving. Employees are encouraged to avoid the consumption of alcohol before driving. VicRoads will provide breath testing devices where appropriate.

2.6 Safe work sponsored functions

Where alcohol is served at VicRoads functions, organisers and attendees shall ensure that appropriate measures are put in place to encourage safe driving practices by ensuring:

- the responsible serving/consumption of alcohol;
- the provision and use of breath testing devices;
- soft drinks and low alcohol beverages are available; and
- food is served whenever alcohol is available.

Attendees should be advised to consider alternative transport arrangements if required. The simplest way to ensure your safety and that of others is if you are planning to drink – don't drive.

2.7 Drugs and driving

VicRoads employees have a responsibility not to drive while under the influence of drugs or medication that is likely to affect driving performance or alertness.

The use of illegal drugs while driving is prohibited as they can impact negatively upon driving performance. Some prescription medications can also have a negative impact upon driving performance and mental alertness. Ask your doctor, pharmacist or health advisor about the effects on driving of any prescribed or non-prescribed (over the counter) medication.

2.8 Speeding

VicRoads employees have an obligation to drive at a safe and legal speed at all times. Speeding is a factor in around 20 per cent of fatal crashes. Employees should drive at a speed appropriate for the conditions and keep at or below the posted speed limit. The overspeed warning-function should be used, when provided, to keep a check on the speed of the vehicle.

Employees should observe speed limits in unenforced areas such as VicRoads car parks where visibility is limited and pedestrian activity is high.

2.9 Traffic Infringements

From 1 January 2010, managers will be informed of any traffic infringement received by an employee involving a government vehicle in connection with work, including those received under the business use provisions of the Executive Car Scheme.

Employees having repeated infringements will be counselled by managers with the aim of improving safety, in particular driving behaviours. (See Guidance for Manager's Discussion with Staff).

Employees with repeat offences will be required to provide evidence of licence currency and validity.

Employees will personally incur the penalties and demerit points attached to all infringements.

Guidance for Managers Discussion with Staff

Repeat Traffic Infringements whilst driving government vehicles on business (Traffic Infringements DO NOT include Parking Infringements or EPA Infringements)

In accordance with VicRoads Safe Driving Policy, I am aware that you have been identified as a driver who has received more than one traffic infringement notice while driving a government vehicle.

This is not a disciplinary matter and will not be dealt with as such.

The aim of this discussion is to improve safety, in particular your safety when driving VicRoads vehicles. I am prepared to assist you in this aim.

What would you like to say about the infringement notice? (***Provide an opportunity for the driver to discuss the matter and to identify any behaviour/s which could be improved e.g. avoiding unreasonably tight schedules when planning/accepting meetings etc.***).

You should be aware of the requirements of VicRoads Safe Driving Policy.

In accordance with the Safe Driving and OH&S Policies, I am required to remind you:

- VicRoads is committed to providing a healthy and safe working environment. As an employee, you are required to observe and comply with safe working procedures and practices and to accept responsibility for protecting your own health and safety and that of others. You are expected to cooperate with managers in achieving a safe and healthy work environment.
- VicRoads considers such infringements as workplace safety matters.

- You must obey all road laws and rules.
- **For speeding offences (exceeding speed limit).** You have an obligation to drive at a safe and legal speed at all times. You are to drive at a speed appropriate for the conditions and keep at or below the posted speed limit. Use speed monitors and cruise control where fitted and when appropriate. Speeding is a factor in around 20 per cent of fatal crashes. Speed both inappropriate and excessive, contributes significantly to road trauma. As speed increases, the severity of impact increases. Stopping distances increase and other manoeuvres to avoid crashes become more difficult. The possibility for road-users to communicate with and perceive the intentions of other roadusers in time to react appropriately decreases, as does the ability to detect hazards.
- **For red-light offences (failing to obey traffic lights).** Red light running is a very high-risk behaviour. Side impact crashes are often the result of red light running. Drivers and passengers involved in side- impact crashes are likely to be seriously injured or killed. In most instances, drivers who run red lights are also speeding - further increasing the risk.
- Mandatory penalties apply for speeding and other driving / traffic offences. These penalties include demerit points and suspension or cancellation of a licence.

If you do not hold or no longer hold a licence (due to a serious traffic offence or loss of demerit points), you must notify me.

I am required to request that you provide evidence that your licence is still current and valid in order that you can undertake your driving duties.

Your safety is important to VicRoads. I trust you will continue to drive safely.

Please acknowledge this discussion. A copy will be placed on your personnel file.

Manager Name (print):

Driver Name (print):

Driver Signature:

Date: //

2.10 Seat belts

Employees have a legal requirement to wear an appropriate restraint at all times while in a moving vehicle. The use of seat belts reduces the chance of serious injury in a crash by 50 per cent. It is the responsibility of both the driver and passengers to ensure that appropriate restraints are used.

Employees will notify the person responsible for vehicle maintenance if the seat belts are not in working order.

2.11 Head rests

Whiplash is caused by the head extending back from the torso in the initial stages of rear impacts and then being thrown forward. To prevent whiplash, the top of the head rests should be at least at eye level or higher and as close to the back of the head as possible.

2.12 Mobile phones

It is illegal to use a hand held mobile phone while driving. Using a mobile phone while driving seriously affects your ability to control the vehicle and respond to hazards in the road environment. Research confirms that when using a mobile phone while driving, including hands free phones, there is an increased risk of crashing.

VicRoads strongly encourages employees to keep the use of hands free phones whilst driving to an absolute minimum. In the event that the driver needs to use a mobile phone, the car should preferably be parked in a safe and legal location before doing so. Drivers can only use a mobile phone to make or receive a phone call while driving if the phone:

- is secured in a commercially designed holder fixed to the vehicle, or
- can be operated by the driver without touching any part of the phone.

All other functions (including video calls, texting and emailing) are prohibited.

To manage the expectations of callers, VicRoads encourages employees who use mobile phones to consider changing their voicemail message to the following example:

“Hi you’ve contacted (your name) at VicRoads. I’m sorry I can’t take your call right now because I’m driving my car or otherwise unavailable. Please leave your name and contact details and I’ll return your call.”

VicRoads recommends that all staff refrain from calling a staff member when they are likely to be driving.

2.13 In the event of a crash or near-miss

Providing first aid at a crash scene has the potential to reduce the loss of life and lessen the severity of injuries. However, employees should not feel obligated to carry out first aid if they do not feel they can assist.

All VicRoads vehicles will have first aid kits in line with the Corporate First Aid Policy. The contents of the first aid kits will be checked every six months.

In the event of a crash/near miss the drivers and/or passengers should take the following actions:

- stop and park the vehicle safely;
- do not give any admission of liability;
- ensure the safety of occupants and alert other road users to any danger – hazard lights may be used as warning signals;
- see who is injured and render all possible assistance;
- alert emergency services as required, by phoning 000 or 112 (mobile phone service) or sending another driver for help;
- do not move crash victims unless their safety is further threatened;
- report all crashes and near misses involving a VicRoads vehicle in the Accident Report Book – Register of Injuries;
- obtain the name, address, phone number and insurer of the other driver(s) involved in a crash with a VicRoads vehicle; and
- if possible, obtain the names and addresses of any witnesses.

2.14 Roadside parking

When parking a vehicle, VicRoads employees should attempt to park away from the carriageway to avoid causing a traffic obstruction. Hazard lights should be used when necessary as warning signals to ensure your safety and alert other road users. Where possible drivers should park in a safe area which may allow them to exit and enter the vehicle safely – preferably from the ‘off – road’ side. It is important to remember that a driver can only stop in an emergency lane in the case of an emergency. Drivers should be aware of parking the vehicle on areas of dry vegetation that could be ignited by a hot vehicle exhaust system.

When visiting work sites, ensure you, and anyone with you, has an approved high visibility vest. This must be worn and fastened by all people carrying out work near any mobile plant or vehicles, or when on or adjacent to a carriageway.

On arriving at a site, park your vehicle in the identified visiting parking areas or as directed by site personnel. Report to the site office or site supervisor, then request and follow all safety directions and instructions for the duration of the site visit. Inform relevant site personnel prior to leaving the site.

Approved vehicles retained overnight should be parked “off street” whenever practical.

2.15 Vehicle Availability

Employees are to ensure vehicles are available for business use by other employees at all times, particularly those which meet emergency vehicle criteria. VicRoads must have the ability to recall and retrieve vehicles if and when required.

3. VICROADS LIABILITY (Note for all employees)

VicRoads will not be vicariously liable for loss or damage caused by an employee in the following circumstances:

- an employee’s blood alcohol concentration exceeding the legal limit;
- an employee is proven to be under the influence of an illegal substance;
- an employee is driving a vehicle outside the conditions of their licence;
- driving at a speed over the posted speed limit;
- the driver and passengers not wearing seat belts;
- the illegal use of a mobile phone when driving; and
- any other unlawful or reckless driving or use of a motor vehicle.

4. PROCESSES AND PRACTICES

4.1 Induction

All new employees will be instructed on the VicRoads Safe Driving Policy.

4.2 Licence checks

Employees driving on VicRoads business must hold a valid Victorian Driver's Licence with current details of the driver's address. It is the responsibility of each driver to ensure their licence is current and valid for the type of vehicle they are driving. All employees shall carry their licence when driving.

New employees or employees moving to a new business area shall present their licence to their manager as part of the induction program. In the event an employee does not hold or no longer holds a licence which authorises them to drive a motor vehicle, the manager should be notified.

4.3 Road Safety awareness

VicRoads will provide important road safety information to employees and encourage safe driving practices.

Employees are encouraged to discuss any driving-related issues or concerns with their managers.

4.4 Environment

VicRoads recognises that vehicles have an impact on the environment. The fuel consumption of vehicles is directly linked to the impact on the environment. Heavy fuel consumption is also linked to aggressive driving.

Drivers should minimise exhaust emissions and fuel consumption by avoiding heavy acceleration or braking unless necessary. Wherever possible, road trips should be minimised by using other means such as teleconferences, car pooling, trip-planning and alternative transport.

4.5 Exemptions from policy

This policy is to apply to all employees. Any proposed exemptions for operational reasons are to be approved by the relevant Director.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

The following personnel have additional responsibilities under this policy.

5.1 Director – People Services and Internal Communications

- ensure this policy is located with other OH&S Policies;
- ensure this policy is distributed to all staff;
- ensure this policy is incorporated in the Safety Management System;
- develop education programs in conjunction with the Executive Director– Road Safety and Network Access;
- review the policy every two years in conjunction with the Executive Director– Road Safety and Network Access;
- monitor the implementation of the policy; and
- develop management and monitoring systems to enable the evaluation of the effectiveness of this policy.

5.2 Executive Director – Road Safety and Network Access

- develop education programs in conjunction with the Director – People Services and Internal Communications; and
- review the policy every two years in conjunction with the Director – People Services and Internal communications.

5.3 Business Area Managers

- ensure employees have received the policy;
- ensure the implementation of this policy is incorporated into Safety Management Plans;
- arrange training of employees on a needs basis;
- ensure employees hold a valid drivers licence;
- discuss repeated traffic infringements and if necessary, any crash incident with employees to improve driving behaviour and to ensure VicRoads Safe Driving Policy is fully explained; and promote the policy.

5.4 Manager Purchasing and Supply

- purchase fleet vehicles that exceed the safety standards;
- collect crash data involving VicRoads vehicles for analysis purposes;
- incorporate demographic data into crash data to highlight high risk driver groups; and
- collect data on traffic and other infringements and vehicle damage and provide six monthly reports to Director – People Services and Internal communications and Executive Director – Road Safety and Network Access.

5.5 Vehicle Coordinators / Officers responsible for maintenance of VicRoads vehicles

- ensure that fleet vehicles are properly maintained/serviced; and
- arrange for the contents of the first aid kit in each car to be checked every six months and replaced as necessary.

5.6 Drivers of VicRoads vehicles

- ensure that the Safe Driving Policy is adhered to.