

# Toolbox Talk

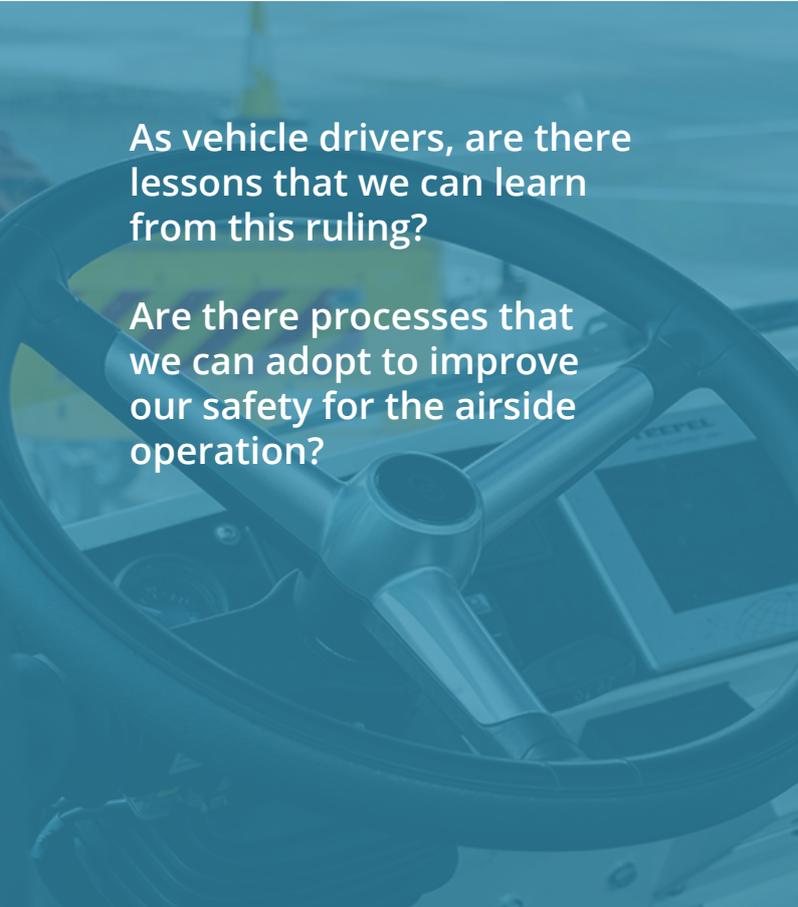
## Sterile Cockpit



*Key points for discussion with managers and operatives*

In 1981 a new rule was created for air crew with the sole purpose of **increasing safety for flight crews and passengers aboard aircraft.**

The **Sterile Cockpit** ruling stated that all non-essential activities during critical phases of flight must cease, therefore allowing the flight crew to perform those duties required for safe operation.



As vehicle drivers, are there lessons that we can learn from this ruling?

Are there processes that we can adopt to improve our safety for the airside operation?



### What are the critical phases of vehicle operating?

Certainly when we conduct intricate manoeuvring around aircraft or negotiate busy airfield junctions but what about when we simply reverse into or out of a parking bay? Or have pulled up outside our favourite airside sandwich shop? Or pulled onto the head of stand to wait for the next turnaround? Statistically it is the operations that we are most familiar with that place us and our fellow work colleagues most at risk.

Surveys confirm that one in three road traffic collisions occur within one mile of our homes - why is this? Simple. **We get distracted and become complacent!** An airside vehicle operator is subjected to a huge number of distractions during their daily work, some of them preventable and some out of their control.

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**So, lets focus on the things that we can do something about...**

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## Mental Distractions

The hard work is done, the shift is over! What's for supper? What's on the telly? Shall I have a coffee? Shall I go out for a pint with my pals?

When we are familiar and comfortable with the environment we are working in and have all the necessary skills in abundance, when we've done the job a thousand times and nothing has ever gone wrong before, humans have the unique ability to switch off. We stop concentrating on our tasks and more often than not this is at a critical phase.

**Your vehicle is a loaded weapon**, capable at any time of causing damage and injury in a split second, drivers must stay alert and focused until the vehicle has stopped and has been secured.

## Foreign Object Debris

How many times, when you've opened the vehicle door has your work sheet blown out of the vehicle cab? Or has a plastic bag been blown across the apron?

What if your jacket, which was placed on the passenger seat, catches the wind and disappears out of the door? Do you chase it or leave it? Do you report it and potentially look a fool?

**All of these situations and many others are easily prevented:**

- Keep your vehicle clean and tidy
- Make sure that all loose objects are correctly stowed
- Don't eat or drink whilst driving
- Never use your mobile phone whilst driving - make sure it's on silent or better still turned off
- And if something happens, stop the vehicle! Don't be tempted to sort it out on the move

## Physical Distractions

How many times have you had a conversation or a laugh and a joke with a friend in the car and then realised that you've missed your turning? Maybe you've entered a 20mph limit going too fast, not noticed the vehicle in front of you slowing down, or arrived at a bend too quickly?

**Be honest - have you ever...**

- Missed seeing a push back on the other side of the taxiway crossing because your work mates were all having a laugh discussing last night's football in the back of the crew bus at the end of a really busy shift?
- Looked at your mobile phone whilst driving, wondered who was calling you, read a text and then looked up again and realised you had travelled much further than you thought?
- Gone across a junction or wandered off the carriageway, crossed the white line or clipped a kerb?
- Dropped your pen, some change or your sandwich whilst driving?
- Had a can of pop ever rolled into the footwell, underneath your pedals?

Although when you reach down to pick up a radio handset you've dropped or to pick up a chip from your lap it only seems to take a second, how far have you traveled in that instant?

**More importantly, what have you missed while you were not looking?**

Ask your passengers to **respect your responsibilities** as the person in charge of the vehicle after all it's your ADP not theirs.  
**A laugh and a joke is for back in the crew room not out on the airfield!**

# RTITB Airside - Global Training Consultancy

[www.rtitb-airside.com](http://www.rtitb-airside.com)  
[solutions@rtitb-airside.com](mailto:solutions@rtitb-airside.com)

UK +44 1952 520 239  
India +91 9999 169 400

