

Notice No. MSN 11 (2023)

Date: 03.01.2023

USE OF MOBILE PHONES AND OTHER PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

This notice advises of the potential dangers of inappropriate use of mobile phones and other personal electronic devices in the workplace.

To

- Vessel Masters
- Ships' Officers
- Ships' Crew
- Marine Pilots
- PEC Holders
- Tug Masters
- Marine Fleet Crew
- Ship Owners
- Ship Operators
- Ship Managers
- Shipping Agents
- Tenants & Berth Operators
- Stevedores
- Ship Repair Companies

Background

The use of mobile phones and other personal electronic devices has been found to be a significant contributory factor to maritime incidents and accidents. Incident investigations around the world highlight that the inappropriate use of mobile phones and other personal devices has led to serious navigational and life-threatening incidents.

Objective

The aim of this notice is to raise awareness concerning distractions caused due to the inappropriate use of mobile phones and other personal electronic devices in the workplace and how such distractions can affect safety. This notice also emphasizes on the importance to implement possible strategies to reduce the risk posed by distractions affecting work-based activities, especially safety-critical activities, that demand attention and situational awareness.

The Problem

People have a limited attention capacity. Should a person's attention shift from the task in hand because of the usage of mobile phone or other personal electronic devices whilst working, such distractions can put the user, and others around them in danger, and significantly impair workplace performance because they:

- Fail to hear safety signals / warnings.
- Do not pay attention to their working conditions and environment.
- Are not exclusively focused on the equipment they are operating.

In the worst-case scenario such consequences include fatality, serious injury, or damage.

Mobile phones are the biggest cause of distraction in the form of texting, talking, checking social media, and gaming. In any work or personal environment these distractions can affect a person's situational awareness, recognition of hazards, and concentration.

Safety measures

Tenants and operators are recommended to implement safety notices and develop policy. In the interest of safety, use of mobile phone and other personal devices should only be for approved work-related communications whilst in the workplace but must not be used during safety critical activities including but not limited to:

- Manoeuvring.
- When focus and concentration is required.
- Handling of towlines, towing winches, mooring ropes and mooring winches.
- Operating equipment or machinery.
- Working near machinery.
- Working in hazardous locations onboard e.g., close to edges / at heights, near suspended loads, near flammable cargo / substances etc.

Note: On a vessel, the use of standard ship borne equipment for emergency communication is preferable (i.e. Global Maritime Distress and Safety System equipment). However, in an emergency, all available means of communications, including mobile phones, should be used. Where the use of mobile is unavoidable, the conversation must be kept as short as possible and limited to appropriate times and places.

Capt. Michael Magee

Group Harbour Master, RAK Ports