

Workplace Distractions

Being distracted at work usually means that your attention is not on the task at hand which in turn can put you or someone else in harm's way and result in injury.

Distractions are often things that we can influence to ensure that they do not happen in the first place.

Concentration is something that each of us need to bring to our work day, every day. If we're not able to concentrate at work, should we be at work?

What if those distractions led to you or someone else being significantly injured?

How can we keep ourselves and each other safe at work?

- What kind of distractions are common? Examples are things like excessive noise, mobile phones, trying to do more than one thing at once (and often doing neither well), clutter and mess.
 - Noise – expected or unexpected, this one will be difficult to prevent due to the nature of the work you're doing. Unless hearing protection is required as part of your PPE, earphones, ear muffs or ear buds are not to be worn at work. If you're playing a stereo in the background, make sure that you can still easily converse with your colleagues.
 - Smartphones; both a blessing and a curse. Personal mobile phones, ipods and other smart devices are not to be used during work hours and can only be accessed during designated breaks.
 - Social media – again keep it for you breaks, or even better, for after work.
 - Multitasking – how many times do we find ourselves trying to quickly knock off a couple of things at once thinking that we'll just get it done quicker? Reality is, we're not built to multi-task and quite frankly, we're *all* terrible at it. Think about it this way, when we attempt to multitask, we're purposefully distracting ourselves from other important tasks.
 - Clutter and mess make it easy for your brain to fixate on something other than the task at hand. Ensuring that you're working in a tidy workplace will eliminate some of those visual distractions (and eliminate likely trip hazards too – double whammy!)
 - Fatigue – if you're exhausted, you're likely to have low concentration and are more likely to be easily distracted and to make poor decisions.
- Incidents caused by distractions are easy to prevent. **We need to make sure** that:
 - we're paying attention to the task at hand,
 - we ask questions or seek clarification if we're unsure,
 - we familiarise ourselves with the equipment; and
 - that we eliminate other factors that can take our attention away from our work (such as fatigue, drugs and alcohol or other health conditions).



Key points

- Follow RPR Trades' policies and procedures along with site specific rules
- Do not use mobile phones during work times - save it for your breaks.
- If allowed, make sure that music is played at a reasonable level and you can still hear what's going on around you.
- Do not wear headphones whilst at work.
- Undertake one thing at a time, take your time and make sure you take your breaks.
- If you have concerns about your safety in the workplace, contact **RPR on 1300 311 777**.