

Bulletin

Towing Operators Division
Body Repair Division



Reference No. Incident Response Service/kz-6-23

Date: 01/06/2023

VicRoads Incident Response Service Trial Update Road Rule 79A and alternative flashing lights

Dear Member

Background

The Victorian Automotive Chamber of Commerce (VACC) wishes to update members on the progress of the trial. VACC has been lobbying the Victorian Government to have towing operators included in the protections afforded by Road Rule 79A. In addition to this, VACC is advising Government that towing operators should be able to use magenta or other coloured warning lights at the scene of an accident or at a roadside tow.

The Department of Transport and Planning is undertaking the VicRoads Incident Response Service (IRS) vehicles flashing lights trial. The trial aims to evaluate the road safety effectiveness of different coloured flashing warning lights. The 18-month trial sees IRS vehicles testing new red and yellow, and red and blue flashing warning lights. The study also captures driver behaviour around events involving tow trucks.

Study overview

Monash University Accident Research Centre (MUARC) are studying the behaviour of motorists passing roadside incidents via 18 CCTV cameras along the Monash Freeway (M1). Driver behaviour will be evaluated by measuring approaching and passing speed of vehicles passing the incidents attended by the IRS vehicles.

On Road Study – Final phase of data collection

- Data is being collected for IRS vehicles displaying different light combinations, including:
 - **PHASE 1** - Red and Yellow - Data collection complete
 - **PHASE 2** - Red and Blue - Data collection complete
 - **PHASE 3** - Yellow and White (baseline state) – Commenced in January 2023
- **Tow Truck data is also collected throughout all three phases of on-road data collection.**
- Data is being reviewed to determine if enough incidents have been captured. Once a suitable sample has been obtained, data collection will conclude, and analysis will commence.

Focus Groups

Focus Groups will be conducted involving IRS crews, tow truck operators, Fire Services, and Victoria Police to obtain their views on:

- Perceptions of compliance with RR79A
- Perceived impacts of the changed light configurations on operations or practice

Community Survey – Planned to commence in June

- The community survey will explore behavioural intentions, recent experiences, barriers/enablers to compliance, and awareness of RR79A.
- The survey will enrich the observations and outcomes from the on-road study
- The outcomes of the trial will assist to consider ways to improve the safety of first responders conducting duties on and/or by the roadside.

VACC will continue to meet with Executive Management from Road Safety Victoria on a regular basis to ensure consideration of extending Road Rule 79A to at-risk cohorts, including towing operators, continues. In addition to this, VACC will also continue to lobby for an alternate colour light scheme.

Further information is available on [VicRoads website](#) alternatively please contact Kathy Zdravevski, Industry Policy Advisor.

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