

How to set up a low-distraction cabin

Driving a truck is a complex task, requiring drivers to be ready to make split-second decisions for hours on end.

According to the **2021 NTARC report**, driver inattention causes nearly two in five [37.9%] of all driver error crashes and more than one in seven large losses.



Technology has added more read-outs, displays and other distractions in a typical truck cab.

Yet too often, we neglect the mental workload and potential distractions they can cause.

Get your gear in the zone

The best way to organise displays and controls is to divide the cabin into three spaces based on the driver's field of view.

Consolidation is critical

Try to avoid fitting new displays, for example by integrating a new system with a truck's existing telematics.

Review new systems; if they could unduly distract drivers, ask the vendor to change how the system behaves.

The goal is to reduce visual clutter and make it safer for drivers to access information while driving.

Non-essential information, such as message alerts and social media fields, should be disabled.



Zone 1:

Driver's field of view

- windscreen
- side windows
- mirrors

Only place controls and displays directly relevant to the driving task in this zone.

These can be viewed with a quick flick of the eyes (typically no more than 2 seconds).

Examples:

GPS, collision detection or blind spot monitoring systems.

Zone 2:

Driver's peripheral vision

- steering wheel
- the instrument cluster behind the steering wheel
- top level of the centre console

Only place controls and displays here that the driver might need to interact with while driving but not related to the driving task itself.

These can be viewed with a longer dip of the eyes (typically no more than 7 seconds).

Examples:

Consignment information or urgent alerts.

Zone 3:

Out of driver's sight

- above the windscreen
- items lower on the centre console

Place controls and displays here for tasks and functions that the driver doesn't need to interact with while driving.

These require taking eyes off the road for longer periods of time.

Examples:

UHF radio, tipper controls, entertainment controls, temperature gauge for a refrigerated trailer, inter-axle and cross-axle locks.

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