

# RANDOM ROADSIDE DRUG TESTING

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR COMMERCIAL DRIVERS

### Why random testing?

- Data from serious and fatal crashes in NZ shows about 30% of all road deaths involve the consumption of an impairing drug. This is almost equal to deaths caused by drink driving
- Previously, Police could require drivers to undergo a physical cognitive impairment test, but technology now exists to screen saliva for the presence of drugs in a similar way to testing breath for alcohol
- In Victoria, Australia, the Transport Accident Commission estimates their similar roadside saliva drug screening is saving 30 lives and 80 serious injuries a year



### The testing process

- Drivers can be required to undergo an oral fluid test at the roadside
- The test screens for the presence of four illicit substances at a pre-determined impairment level – THC (cannabis), Methamphetamine, MDMA (ecstasy) and cocaine
- The impairment level is set above the amount for prescription cannabis or amphetamines, so prescribed use or passive exposure or historical use should not result in a positive (fail) test result
- The driver places a single-use plastic paddle under their tongue



- The test takes around 5 minutes, but may be done at the same time other checks are being undertaken so should not significantly delay commercial drivers

### After the test

- If there is only one vertical line (the 'control') displayed, the driver can continue on their way
- If two vertical lines are indicated against one or more of the drugs, it is a positive test (fail). The Police then collect a saliva sample to be sent off for lab testing
- The driver is then asked to do a second saliva screening test
- If the second one displays no lines (negative), the driver can continue on their way and await the results of the lab test for any possible infringements
- If the second screening test is also positive, the driver is forbidden to drive for 12 hours on the spot
- If this happens to you, you must alert your manager as soon as possible
- An officer can also require the driver to undergo the cognitive impairment test, which can lead to formal charges
- Police expect about 12% of the screening tests to return a positive result. That's 1 in every 8 drivers tested

## What are the penalties?

- If the lab test shows the presence of one illicit drug at a pre-determined impairment level, the driver will receive a \$200 fine and 50 demerit points
- Two or more impairing drugs results in a \$400 fine and 75 demerits
- Repeat offences incur the same penalties
- Refusal or failure to comply will incur a \$400 fine and 75 demerits, and an immediate 12-hour driving prohibition, so compliance is important
- Different penalties apply for offences that include both alcohol and drugs

## Your rights and responsibilities

- If you are concerned that prescription medication, or recreational drug use, may put you at risk of failing a roadside drug test, you should discuss this with your supervisor and could also consider seeking medical advice or drug counselling services
- It's far better for your employer to be aware of possible substance abuse than deal with a roadside licence suspension with a truck full of cargo – or livestock
- Drivers can apply for a medical defence after an infringement, if it is for a drug that has been prescribed to them: [www.police.govt.nz/advice-services/infringement-services/medical-defence](http://www.police.govt.nz/advice-services/infringement-services/medical-defence)

## Information from Transporting New Zealand

Members and non-members with additional questions can contact Transporting New Zealand at [info@transporting.nz](mailto:info@transporting.nz) or 04 472 3877 for additional information and support.

