

CAR PARKS ARE MENTAL

STAY CALM

A variety of psychological factors influence the choices and behaviour of drivers in car parks, including preference, social cohesion, conformity, and convenience. Unfortunately, human factors contribute significantly to unsafe (and potentially costly) driving behaviours in car parks. Two of the most prevalent human factors driving car park collisions are driver distraction and aggression.

Driver Distraction

- Distractions divert the driver's attention from the driving task and impact on safety critical measures, such as stopping distances. Distracted driving is as dangerous as driving drunk or driving fatigued.
- Common in-vehicle distractions are other passengers, drinking and eating, reaching for objects, personal grooming and being distracted by in-vehicle technologies or loose objects.
- Several specific factors commonly distract drivers in parking lots; trying to find a car park, thinking about their shopping list, or racing to get their train or bus.
- Technology is also a prevalent distraction; in a 2016 NSC public opinion poll, 66% of U.S. drivers said they would make phone calls while driving through parking lots. Respondents also said they would program GPS systems, text, use social media, send or receive emails, and take or watch videos.

NEVER DRIVE
DISTRACTED

Remember

Pedestrians are also prone to distraction in car parks, particularly when they are focused on heading to their destination or finding their car. Distracted pedestrians are more likely to walk slowly and change directions suddenly. They are less likely to acknowledge other road users, and to check for traffic before crossing.

A partnership between:



Driver Aggression

- Aggressive driving behaviour is a result of anger and includes verbal aggression (such as swearing at another driver), using the vehicle to express aggression (such as tailgating, speeding, or deliberately cutting off other drivers), and physical aggression.
- Aggressive driving is an important road safety concern, and increases a driver's crash risk 35-fold, a level comparable to drink driving.
- Aggressive driving is extremely common in car parks. A range of factors lead to aggressive behaviour in car parks, including time pressures, territoriality over car parks, general aggressive tendencies, and annoyance over others' driving behaviour. The most common cause of aggression in car parks stems from difficulty finding a spot. In busy parking lots with limited spaces drivers tend to become more likely to take risks and get emotional.
- "All year-round drivers expect to find a car space typically within 3-5 minutes. When car parks are busy we find that once we pass the 5-minute mark we start to feel annoyed and impatient – and the longer it takes, the more frustrated we become as we are not meeting our goal. This can quickly escalate to driving erratically, which as we know is how accidents happen"
- The worst times for aggressive driving behaviour in car parks is weekends and festive seasons. In fact, insurance data reveals that car park incidents increase by 47% in December.
- Those who drive for work are more likely to experience these pressures and interactions and have been found to experience anger and aggression more frequently whilst driving.

Remember

Keep your cool in car parks to avoid slipping into aggressive and unsafe driving behaviours which put yourself and others at risk.

Allow extra time for parking so you don't feel rushed, which can lead to emotional responses such as aggression.

Avoid letting your emotions get the better of you, no matter how frustrated you feel. Be patient and courteous to other drivers at all times.