Dispatcher Was Playing Game on Cellphone Before German Train Crash



Distracted driving isn't a safety issue only for the operation of cars, trucks, etc. Anyone operating or involved in the operation of equipment should avoid distractions while doing so, especially distractions involving cell phones.

Tragic example: On Feb. 9, 2016, two trains collided near Bad Aibling, Germany, killing 11 people and injuring 80 others.

Prosecutors recently issued an arrest warrant for the railway dispatcher, claiming that he was playing a game on his cellphone until just before the accident. Doing so violated work rules and had most likely caused the crash. As a result, he'll be charged with involuntary manslaughter.

Wolfgang Giese, the state prosecutor said in a statement, 'The latest investigation shows that, in violation of the railway work rules, the accused switched on his mobile phone during his shift on the morning of the accident, started an online computer game and played actively for an extended period of time until shortly before the collision.'

'On the basis of the timing, one must assume that the attention of the accused was diverted from regulating the traffic' on the railway, the statement added. 'Because of this distraction, the accused made some false assumptions about where the trains might cross, gave the wrong signals to the

trains and entered a false combination for an emergency call to the trains, so that the drivers never heard those signals.’

The dispatcher admitted to having played a game, but said his attention hadn’t been diverted.

UPDATE: On Dec. 5, 2016, the dispatcher was sentenced to three and a half years in jail for culpable homicide and culpable bodily harm.

For more information on the possible impacts of distracted operation of any kinds of equipment, see:

- Walking while using a cellphone.
- Texting while driving.
- Distractions other than cellphones.