

Possible link between electronic billboards and highway crashes

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A new study published in *Traffic Injury Prevention* has found that drivers take more and longer glances at electronic billboards than regular signs, indicating a possible link between these digital signs and highway crashes.

Eye-grabbing, electronic signs replacing traditional billboards along highways are meant to attract and keep the attention of passersby with bright colors and constantly changing messages. The ramifications for traffic safety have been long debated, and this study provides scientific evidence previously lacking.

The study used sophisticated eye-tracking devices to monitor the visual behaviors of experienced drivers passing traditional and electronic billboards during day and night conditions. The experimental route was a 40km long stretch of a three-lane motorway with heavy traffic running through central Stockholm, Sweden.

The electronic billboards attracted significantly more [visual attention](#) than the other traffic signs included in the study. Dwell times were longer, the visual time sharing intensity was higher, very long single glances were more frequent, and the number of fixations were greater for the electronic billboards. Although whether the electronic billboards constitute a traffic safety hazard cannot be answered conclusively based on the present data, these findings do validate existing concerns about the relationship between electronic billboards and higher crash risks.

More information:

www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15389588.2012.731546

Provided by Taylor & Francis

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