

Mobile Phones and Driving - Safety Tips

Safety is Your Most Important Call

When using a mobile phone while driving, safety is the most important call you will make. All drivers can make safety their first priority by following these ten simple steps.

1. Always Use Hands Free:

In Australia it is illegal to use a mobile phone while driving unless you use a hands free in-car-kit or portable hands free device. When using a portable hands free device make sure it is set up and working before you start to drive. A hands free device can reduce the physical effort to make and receive calls; however, it alone doesn't make using a mobile phone while driving safe.

2. Plan Your Trip and Make Calls When Stationary:

Whenever possible plan your trip and try to make calls when stationary or during rest breaks in long trips.

3. Don't Call in Heavy Traffic or Weather Conditions:

Don't accept or make calls if traffic and weather conditions would make it unsafe to do so. Also, always tell the person you are speaking to that you're driving and that you may have to end the call if driving conditions change.

4. Don't Engage in Complex or Emotional Conversations:

If a call becomes complex or emotional tell the person you are speaking to, you are driving and suspend the call. Complex and emotive conversations on a mobile phone, or with other passengers, and driving don't mix – they are distracting and can be dangerous.

5. Use Message Services to Answer Calls:

If a call is unnecessary or you consider it unsafe to answer at the time, don't answer the call and let it divert to voicemail or an answering service.

6. Pull Over Safely if You Stop to Make a Call:

If you choose to stop to answer or make a call or retrieve a message, pull over carefully in a safe area. Don't stop where you could be a hazard to other vehicles, pedestrians or yourself.

7. Use Your Phone's Features to Reduce the Effort to Make a Call:

Carefully read your phone's instruction manual and learn to use the speed dial and redial features of your phone. Also, if possible, use a phone with voice activated dialling and automatic answering features to reduce the effort to make and receive a call.

8. Never Take Notes, Look Up Phone Numbers, Read or Send SMS:

Always keep both eyes on the road and never take notes during a call. Don't read or send text messages or SMS (Short Messaging Service) while driving. If required, use a directory assistance service which connects you directly to the number and don't look up phone numbers from your phone's memory.

9. Tell callers you're driving while on the phone:

Always let the person you're speaking to know that you are driving. This lets them know that you may not always respond immediately and reminds you that driving safely is your first priority. "Hello, I'm in the car at the moment..."

10. In Emergencies Use Your Phone to Call for Help:

Dial '000' or '112' in case of fire, traffic accident, road hazard or medical emergency. Both '000' and '112' are free calls, and will connect you to emergency services. Almost one third of all genuine calls to '000' are made from mobile phones.