

SAFETY ALERT



TITLE: Driving – mobile phone use

Number: 25

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Background



Did you know that using a mobile phone while driving increases your risk of a crash four-fold, regardless of whether a hands-free kit is used?

And if you take your eyes off the road – to read a text message for example – while driving at 60 km/h for just two seconds, you're travelling 33 metres blind?

Distracted driving slows down your reaction times and puts you in danger of failing to see hazards such as traffic lights, stop signs or other road users, including pedestrians and cyclists.

New penalties effective 1 September 2020

It is illegal for the driver of a vehicle to create, send or look at a text message, video message, email or similar communication, even when the phone is secured in a mounting or can be operated without touching it. Effective from 1 September 2020:

- \$500 penalty and three demerit points for touching or holding a mobile phone while not in a cradle to make, receive or end a voice call.
- \$1000 penalty and four demerit points for creating, sending or looking at a text, email, social media, photo, video or similar.

Key points

- A driver of a vehicle can only touch a mobile phone to receive and terminate a phone call if the phone is secured in a mounting affixed to the vehicle. If the phone is not secured in a mounting, it can only be used to receive or terminate a phone call without touching it (e.g. using voice activation, a Bluetooth hands-free car kit, earpiece or headset).
- Touching/holding includes resting on any part of the driver's body (e.g lap). It does not include held in a pocket of the driver's clothing or in a pouch worn by the driver.
- Driving includes being stationary with the motor running (e.g. waiting at stoplights, stopping roadside).
- Vehicle must be parked before a driver can legally hold a mobile phone (the ignition must be turned off!).
- All drivers are permitted to use their mobile phone as a navigational tool, but only if the phone is placed in a mounting secured to the vehicle, and the route is set and started before driving commences. If you touch the phone while driving to change the function of the navigational app, even when secured in a mounting, you face a \$1000 infringement and 4 demerit points.