



DISTRACTION

FATAL 5

Driving is a complex task that requires coordination of a wide range of skills. Drivers become distracted when using mobile phones, eating, drinking, talking to passengers and using audio equipment.

Mobile phones and other personal electronic devices are major sources of distraction. While an increasing number of vehicles are fitted with bluetooth technology, research indicates that the use of a hands-free kit only reduces the level of physical and visual distraction to the driver but cognitive distraction remains high. You are four times more likely to be involved in a crash while using a mobile phone, even if it's hands-free.

What the research shows

Dialling, texting and talking on a mobile phone while driving can lead to:

- riskier decision making – with attention and concentration diverted away from the driving task
- reduction in a driver's ability to judge distances, speed, space and environmental conditions
- slower reactions
- speed variations
- less controlled braking – with reaction times slowed, the driver will tend to brake later, with more force and less control
- fluctuations in speed and following distances
- wandering from the lane
- reduced awareness of the surroundings – when deep in conversation, the driver will tend to spend less time checking their mirrors and monitoring the traffic and road environment.

What the law says

- Except for Learner and P1 drivers, a mobile phone may only be used when driving to make or receive a phone call, provided that the phone is secured in a commercially designed and manufactured mounting device affixed to the vehicle or, the phone can be remotely operated.
- Learner and P1 drivers are not permitted to use any function of a hand-held or hands-free mobile phone while driving.
- Using a hand-held mobile phone is also illegal when your vehicle is stationary but not parked (e.g. when stopped at traffic lights).

The penalties

- Driver using a mobile phone – driver fined and loses three demerit points.
- Learner or P1 driver using a mobile phone – driver fined and loses three demerit points.

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