

KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE ROAD



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How to reduce risk when driving and using a mobile phone

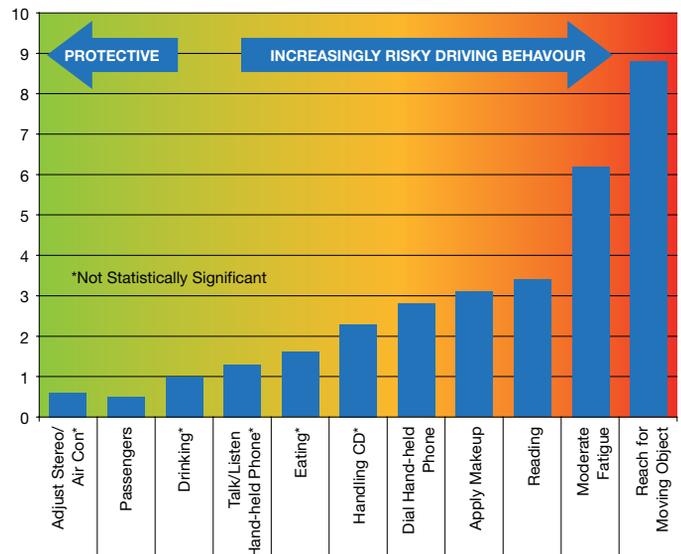
Driving is a complex task that requires all your focus to minimise potentially dangerous distractions.

Drivers face a range of distractions when behind the wheel, such as: interacting with mobile phones; iPods and navigation devices; looking and reaching for objects; reading maps and newspapers; looking at signs and billboards; adjusting radios and CD players; noisy children; passengers; and eating and drinking.

One of the most common driver distractions is mobile phone use. However, drivers need to be aware of and know how to reduce the impact of all distractions they face.

Recent research based on real world driving conditions found that the key to reducing accidents from distractions is to **keep your eyes on the road**.

Relative Risk Estimate for Crash or Near Crash - Adult Drivers



Australian Mobile
Telecommunications Association

JUST HOW RISKY ARE MOBILE PHONES WHILE DRIVING?



TEXTING

Recent international research using sophisticated in-car cameras, eye trackers, and sensors shows that texting is very dangerous. This also applies to reading emails and engaging in social media.

Drivers taking their eyes off the road to write or read text messages have up to a 23 times greater risk of crashing or having to take evasive action to avoid a crash.



DIALLING

The research, which involved nearly 3 million kilometres or 43,000 hours of real-life driving data, found that looking down to dial a handheld mobile phone substantially increases the risk of drivers having a crash or near crash by 2.8 times.

Reaching for a moving object, such as a mobile phone, increased the risk of a crash or near crash by 8.8 times.



NOVICE

Some risks were much higher for inexperienced novice drivers who were six times more likely to crash or near crash when dialling.

They were also more than three times at risk when texting or looking at the internet on their phones.

Novice drivers are also at four times the risk of a crash overall which further increases the risk of dialling and texting.

Learner and P1 drivers are banned from using all mobile devices, including hands-free kits.

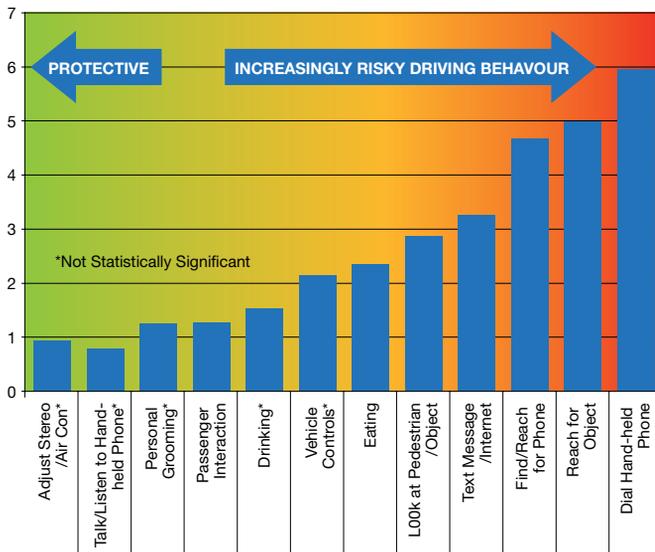


WHAT TO DO

Reaching for moving items, such as mobile phones, dialling and texting are all much riskier tasks than talking on or listening to a mobile phone call.

Therefore, the most effective action you can take to reduce the risks is to put your mobile phone in a cradle or use a Bluetooth hands-free kit to make calls when driving. Use single button dialling functions or voice activated calling so you can keep your eyes on the road ahead.

Relative Risk Estimate for Crash or Near Crash - Teen Drivers



The information in these graphs is based on an address by Dr T Dingus, VTII, to the Australasian College of Road Safety, Melbourne, September 2011.



HOW TO REDUCE THE RISK USING YOUR MOBILE WHEN DRIVING

Drivers can take some simple steps to reduce the risks:

Never Text – it's very dangerous and illegal

Texting drivers take their eyes off the road for 4.6 seconds over a 6 second interval. This means that at 60kph a driver is not watching the road for 75 metres or half the length of the SCG! It's also illegal to text when stopped at traffic lights because although your car is stationary it's not legally parked.

Always keep your eyes on the road

The clear lesson from the latest research is that keeping your eyes on the road is critical to reducing driving risks from mobile phone use. Talking and listening are not too dangerous in light traffic and good driving conditions, but taking your eyes off the road to dial or answer a mobile is risky.

Reduce the risks of mobile phone use, avoid fines, and follow the law:

Buy and install a cradle and Bluetooth Hands-free kit

Buy, install, and use a cradle for your phone

The Australian Road Rules require drivers to place their mobiles in approved cradles affixed to the dashboard so they are looking at the road ahead and not glancing down. Drivers can touch their handset in a cradle to make or receive voice calls only. They cannot text, send emails, web browse, engage in social media or, in some States, use their phone-based GPS. Drivers can also use Bluetooth provided they do not touch the handset. Study the road rules for hands-free mobile use in your State or Territory. Using the handset's speaker is allowed only when it's in a cradle.

Use your smartphone's features

Smartphones provide voice-activated dialling and automatic answering features to reduce the effort of making and receiving a call and allow drivers' eyes to remain on the road at all times. You can also install apps that limit a phone to calling and voice activation. Smart drivers use their handsets' technology to reduce driving distractions.

Don't always answer your phone

Hands-free mobiles in cars are legal in all States and Territories. However, this does not mean it's appropriate for drivers to use them at all times. Drivers should not make calls in heavy traffic, at intersections or in bad weather or poor road conditions. If a call is unnecessary or you consider it unsafe to answer at the time, don't answer the call. Let it divert to voicemail or an answering service. Pull over safely if you stop to make a call and don't stop where you could be a hazard to other vehicles.



For more information see

Driving Tips at

www.amta.org.au

or call **(02) 6239 6555**