

Mobile devices while driving

Explain dangers

Distracted driving is the number-one killer on Ontario roads. It is responsible for more deaths than impaired driving or speeding.

Distracted driving can be caused by using a mobile device while you're behind the wheel. This includes:

- Talking or texting on a phone
- Manually dialing or scrolling through contacts
- Programming or looking at your GPS
- Looking at display screens of devices that are unrelated to driving such as laptops, MP3 players, or DVD players.

Studies have shown that drivers who use a mobile device while driving are four times more likely to be in a collision.

Most of us drive to and from work with our mobile devices within arm's reach. Whether it's a personal or work-related call or text, it can be difficult to resist the urge to answer or take a look. However, each time you read a text or an email, you're taking your eyes off of the road for at least four seconds.

Studies have shown that drivers who take their eyes off the road for more than two seconds are twice as likely to have a crash.

Identify controls

Use hands-free devices—In Ontario, it's against the law to use hand-held communication and entertainment devices while driving. Although hands-free devices are permitted, you're not allowed to manually dial a phone, scroll through contacts, or program your GPS.

Don't use your devices—There is no conclusive evidence that using a hands-free device is safer than using a hand-held one. So the best practice is not to use a mobile device while operating a vehicle.

Resist the urge to look at or answer emails or text messages until you've finished driving. Let all phone calls go directly to your voicemail. If you must send a reply or make a call, pull over to a safe spot off the road.

To resist the urge to use your device, you can:

- Turn off your device or switch it to silent mode before you get in the car.
- Silence any audible notifications that tempt you to check your phone while driving.
- Put your device in the glove compartment (lock it, if you have to) or in a bag on the back seat out of reach.

Set up your devices—Before travelling, map out your route or destination first and put your travel information into your GPS.

Make sure your phone has caller ID and/or voicemail. If the phone rings, don't answer it unless you pull over to a safe spot. Or let a passenger answer the call.

Some apps or settings can block incoming calls and texts while driving or send automatic replies to people trying to call or text you. Before you get in your vehicle, record an outgoing message that tells callers you're driving and you'll get back to them when you're done.

Set a good example—If you know that a worker is driving, do not call them on the phone or try to contact them on any other wireless device. If you're not sure if they're driving and the matter is urgent, place the call but ask them immediately whether they're driving. If they are, ask them to call you back after they pull over.

If you receive a call from a worker who you suspect is on their cell phone or other wireless device, ask them if they're driving. If they are, suggest that they pull over and call you back.

Demonstrate

Show workers how to download a car mode app or activate the "Do Not Disturb While Driving" feature on their phones.

If your company has a mobile device or distracted driving policy, review it with your workers. Be clear about who the policy applies to (subcontractors, temporary workers, etc.) and what the consequences will be if they violate it.

If your company does not have one, download a sample one from ihsa.ca/distracted-driving or from the **Policy and Program Templates** section (under **Company Health and Safety Rules**).