



Media Release

Friday 12 August 2016

Drive phone free campaign launched

Selwyn District Council has launched a new campaign to remind motorists of the dangers of driving while using a phone. Advertisements and billboards will promote the drive phone free message to Selwyn residents.

Using a mobile phone increases the risk of a crash greatly. According to the NZ Transport Agency drivers who text on a mobile phone while driving are 23 times more likely to be involved in a crash than drivers who were focused on the road.

It has been illegal for motorists to use a hand-held mobile phone while driving in New Zealand since November 2009. Drivers cannot use a hand-held mobile phone;

- to make, receive, or terminate a telephone call
- to create, send or read a text message or email
- to create, send or view a video message.

Breaching these rules can result in a fine of \$80 and 20 demerit points.

Selwyn Road Safety Coordinator Ngaire Tinning says that using a mobile while driving is unsafe and puts the driver, their passengers and other road users at risk.

“Motorists need their hands on the wheel and eyes on the road to be able to navigate the road safely. We also encourage people to avoid using any type of phone in a vehicle as motorists need to be able to concentrate on driving without distraction,” she says.

“Unfortunately it’s common for people to use mobile phones while driving even though it’s against the law,” she adds. “I would urge people who see their friends or family using a mobile while driving to remind them it is dangerous and illegal and it puts them at higher risk of being involved in a crash. By doing this you are looking out for their safety.”

Mrs Tinning says that even hands free phones can be a risk when driving, as it’s not just holding a phone which is distracting but taking part in a conversation.

The drive phone free campaign encourages motorists to make calls before or after their journey and to either let phone calls go to voice mail or have a passenger take the call. If calls or messages are urgent then drivers should pull over to return the call or read the message.

Local police are supporting the drive phone free campaign and will be looking out for any motorists who breach the law.

A short survey on phone use has been developed for Selwyn residents. Responses received before 12 September will go into the draw for a \$150 Westfield Voucher. To complete the survey visit www.selwyn.govt.nz/drivephonefree from Monday 15 August or collect a survey from Council Service centres or libraries.

Ends

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