



Media release  
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## **Driving phone free is safest**

A survey of Selwyn residents has revealed that many drivers are still using mobile phones.

97% of the 359 residents who completed the Selwyn District Road Safety Drive phone free survey reported that they had seen people using mobile phones when stopped in traffic, for example at traffic lights.

“Under changes to legislation in 2009 using a phone while you are driving or when you are at traffic lights is illegal,” says Selwyn Road Safety Coordinator, Ngaire Tinning. “Using a phone when you have stopped at the lights is a bad idea as many drivers are tempted to continue to finish their conversation or texting as they drive off.”

“At that time you have a lot of demands on your attention like checking for traffic before you go and putting your car into gear and you shouldn’t also be trying to complete a conversation or send a text,” she says.

The survey was carried out as part of a wider Selwyn District Council campaign to encourage motorists to drive phone free by not using mobile or hands free phones so that they were focused on driving when in a car.

While the survey results indicated this was an area where drivers can improve, many people who took part in the survey reported they took specific actions to ensure they were not distracted by a phone while driving. 40% of drivers let a passenger take a phone call if it rang when they were driving, and 27% of drivers usually let their phone go to voicemail. 6% of drivers also turned their phone off, put it on silent or put it out of reach.

Survey participants were asked to share their driving safety tips. The advice given included pulling over to answer the phone, turning the phone off or putting it out of reach when driving.

“Our advice is that if you can switch your phone off while driving that eliminates the risk that you will be distracted by a phone and this is the safest option. If you do need to have your phone on, then seeing if someone else can answer it or letting it go to answer phone and returning the call once you have stopped are also good options,” says Ngaire.

For more information, please contact:

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