



Media Release

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## Drive safe, drive phone free

Nearly 75% of Selwyn residents acknowledge the high risk involved in texting while driving – when drivers focus on their phone, they're not focused on the road.

That's one of the findings of a recent survey carried out by Selwyn District Council, which is getting on board with the nationwide Drive Phone Free campaign. The campaign aims to increase driver awareness that talking on the phone, texting or even checking a hand held mobile phone while driving puts them and other road users at risk.

With cellphones now a large part of many people's lives it can be difficult to ignore them when driving, however it is important to remember to put them away.

Selwyn Road Safety Coordinator Ngaire Tinning says it's not just ourselves we have to think about when driving.

"We can all do our part in increasing road safety by not using phones in any way when driving, but we should also encourage others to do the same. We all hold a responsibility to provide a good example for younger passengers by choosing to ignore our phones or turning them off when driving," she says.

In November 2009 a law was introduced making it illegal to use hand-held mobile phones while driving. This includes making, receiving or terminating a phone call, creating, sending or even reading a text or email and creating, sending or viewing a video message.

Hands-free devices are often considered as a solution to minimise the risk of driver distraction. While they do decrease the visual risk (taking drivers' eyes off the road) and manual risk (taking drivers' hands off the wheel) they don't minimise cognitive distraction meaning drivers' minds are not focused on the road.

Keep an eye on the Council Facebook page over the next month for weekly posts and prizes to be won to encourage drivers to drive phone free. Pick up your free cell phone screen cleaner from a Council Library and Service Centre or from a rural garage.

**ENDS**

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