



Media release

Thursday 24 October 2013

## Drive phone free campaign

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

Research shows that dialing and talking on a mobile phone while driving can lead to:

- Riskier decision making – by affecting the drivers' judgement and concentration.
- Slower reactions – motorists often take longer to respond to traffic signs, road hazards or may completely miss them
- Slower and less controlled braking - brake reaction time is slower, and when drivers do brake, it is with more force and less control which results in shorter stopping distances between your car and the car in front
- Wandering out of your lane – you are more likely to wander out of your lane when you're using a mobile phone, even on a straight road with little traffic
- Not being alert to your surroundings - when using a mobile phone, drivers tend to spend less time checking your mirrors and observing what's going on around them. This affects their ability to negotiate traffic safely and anticipate and respond to hazards.

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 incurs a fine of \$80 and 20 demerit points. However, Police report that it is still common to see drivers using mobiles on the road.

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 to be able to navigate the road safely. We also encourage people to avoid using a phone at all in a car as motorists need to be able to concentrate on driving without distraction."

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.

Last year Selwyn District Council asked residents to complete a survey about driver distraction. 416 responses were received. Survey participants considered mobile phone use to be associated with a high level of risk.

This year, a short survey on mobile phone use has been developed for Selwyn residents. Responses received before 30 November will go into the draw for a \$100 MTA Voucher. To complete the survey visit [www.selwyn.govt.nz/drivephonefree](http://www.selwyn.govt.nz/drivephonefree) or collect a survey from Council Service centres or libraries.

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