

QuickSmarts

Mobile Phone Distractions



\$1078 fines and 4 demerit points for mobile phone offences from 1 July 2022.

The penalties

From 1 July 2022, the penalties for illegally using a mobile phone while driving are a \$1078 fine and 4 demerit points. This is to help deter people from this dangerous behaviour.

The fine and demerit points applies to all drivers who use their phone illegally including car, truck drivers and motorcycle riders.

Learner drivers will also lose their licence after just one mobile phone offence. P-plate holders can also lose their licence for a single offence.

Double demerit points apply for a second mobile phone offence in 12 months. This you will receive another \$1078 fine and a further eight demerit points. This will cost most drivers their licence.

Bicycle riders will also be fined \$1078 for illegally using a mobile phone while riding, but no demerit points will be issued.

The message is clear – Leave your phone alone.

Drivers and riders are encouraged to set up the Do Not Disturb While Driving function on their phones to help avoid using their phones.

Information on the new penalties the rules and how to set up the Do Not Disturb While Driving function on phones can be found on the Queensland Government's StreetSmarts website at <https://streetsmarts.initiatives.qld.gov.au/driver-distraction/leave-your-phone-alone>

The rules

It is illegal to hold your phone in your hand or have it resting on any part of your body, including your lap, while driving. This applies even when you're stopped in traffic or at traffic lights. The phone doesn't need to be turned on or in use for it to be an offence. These rules also apply to bicycle riders.

If you have an **open or P2 licence** you can use a phone hands-free, for example, in a cradle attached to the vehicle. This can include to accept calls, use navigation apps, skip a song, or accept/finish a trip as a rideshare driver. However, the position of the phone must not obscure your view of the road, you must have proper control of your vehicle, and drive with due care and attention at all times.

Open and P2 licence holders can also use a phone hands-free if it's in a pocket of your clothing or a pouch you're wearing. However, you must not touch or look at the phone. It can only be operated using your voice.

It is illegal for **learner and P1 drivers under 25 years old** to use a phone in any way while driving. This includes using maps, Bluetooth and hands-free. If your phone is in a pocket of your clothing or a pouch you're wearing, you must not use it in any way. This includes touching it, looking at it or operating it with your voice. Passengers of these drivers also cannot use phones on loudspeaker.

All drivers can hold a phone when safely stopped to:

- pay for goods and services, for example at a drive through;
- gain access to or from a road-related area, such as a car park;
- present a digital driver licence or other document to police when asked; or
- get a card or money out of a phone wallet for the above purposes.

You can also use your phone when safely parked. Parked means stopped with the intention of staying at that place.

The facts

On average 28 people are killed and 1415 seriously injured each year on Queensland roads as a result of crashes where driver distraction played a part.¹

However, the true extent to which distractions (including mobile phones) contribute to road crashes is likely to be higher because drivers may not admit to police they were distracted at the time of the crash.

Using a mobile phone while driving multiplies your risk of a serious crash by four.²

Research shows using a mobile phone while driving can be as risky as drink driving.³

The unexpected can happen at any time – so even the smallest distraction can be deadly. Using a mobile phone when driving means taking your eyes and mind off the road – which can have serious consequences.

Even when your eyes are off the road for just two seconds, a vehicle moving at 60km/h travels more than 33 metres. The average person's time to react to an event is 1.8 seconds.

This means nearly four seconds can pass before the average distracted driver can react to a hazard, increasing their risk of a serious crash.

This table shows the distance travelled in two seconds by a driver at various speeds

Travel speed	Distance travelled (in 2 secs)
40 km/h	22.22 metres
50 km/h	27.78 metres
60 km/h	33.33 metres
80 km/h	44.44 metres
100 km/h	55.56 metres

1. Data Analysis, Department of Transport and Main Roads QLD. Fatality data extracted November 2022 using road casualty statistics 2017-2021.
2. McEvoy, S., Stevenson, M., McCart, A., Woodward, M., Haworth, C., Palamara, P. and Cercarelli, R. (2005). 'Role of mobile phones in motor vehicle crashes resulting in hospital attendance: a case-crossover study'. *BMJ* 331: 428-30.
3. Stayer, D., Drews, F. and Crouch, D. (2006). 'A comparison of the cell phone driver and the drunk driver.' *Human Factors* 48(2): 381-91.

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