

TIPS

FOR CELL PHONE FREE DRIVING



BUCKLE UP, THEN HANG UP.

It is ideal to turn off all cellular devices as soon as you put on your seat belt.

When a cell phone rings or vibrates, it shifts your attention away from the road and you may be tempted to search for it, look at the call display, or answer a “quick call”.

SEND A CLEAR MESSAGE.

Update your voicemail message to let callers know you do not answer your phone while driving.

If you are driving a long distance, leave a message to explain you need more time than usual to return calls. You can also leave a similar message to manage your e-mail if you carry a PDA.

TAKE TIME TO RESPOND.

If you drive most of the day, plan regular times to check messages and make phone calls. Pull into a gas station, rest area or parking lot every half hour to check and record messages and return phone calls or emails.

Always check voicemail and email before you drive to your next meeting or job site.

POSITION YOURSELF WISELY.

If you need to use your cell phone, always stop in a safe area where other drivers expect to find stationary vehicles – such as a parking lot, rest stop, residential street or gas station.

Always check for pedestrians and cyclists before pulling over.

It can be dangerous to stop on the side of the road due to traffic blind spots, poor weather or fast traffic.

PARTNER UP.

When you need to travel for a long period of time, change your voicemail to give callers the name and number of a co-worker who can help them while you are driving.



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SEPARATE EMERGENCIES FROM ROUTINE.

If your work involves emergency calls, you can reduce distraction by setting up a system that allows you to distinguish urgent calls from routine calls without looking at your phone display. Otherwise, you will likely answer your phone each time it rings.

If you can, assign a distinct ring tone to all callers who need to contact you in an emergency. This special ring then warns you of urgent phone calls. Emergencies create higher levels of stress and distraction, so it is ideal to stop in a safe location before addressing such issues.

You could also carry an emergency pager so people can page you in an emergency rather than call you. When you receive a page, you know to pull safely out of traffic to return a call.

NEVER COMPETE WITH A RED LIGHT.

Most collisions occur at intersections, so it is not safe to make a phone call – or send a text message – while stopped at a red light.

Since you cannot predict if you will complete a conversation before the light turns green, you could cause a collision due to distraction. This is especially true when you are making a left hand turn because this action requires complex decision-making and a high level of awareness.

THINK TWICE ON QUIET ROADS.

About 70 per cent of Alberta's fatal car crashes occur on rural highways due to higher speed, wildlife, variable road conditions, poor night-time visibility, traffic blind spots and bad weather.

Drivers on rural roads may have a false sense of security and control. The conversation is always the most dangerous distraction regardless of where you are driving.

DRIVE LESS, CONNECT MORE.

Many Calgary Health Region workplaces have teleconference and video conference services that allow you to connect with other colleagues from different sites.

When possible, join meetings through this technology to decrease the amount of time in your vehicle.

