

## Fact Sheet

# New Road Safety Rules:

## Using mobile phones and visual display units

Effective 9 November 2009

From November 2009, there will be some changes to Victoria's road safety rules.

The changes include amendments to the rules for using mobile phones and visual display units.

### Road safety reason

Using a mobile phone or a visual display unit as you drive is distracting and creates dangerous situations that could be fatal.

The risk of being involved in a crash increases by as much as four times, when using a mobile phone as you drive.

Experts estimate that texting increases the risk of a crash or near crash by up to 15 times for car drivers and over 20 times for heavy vehicle drivers.



### Mobile phones

Using a mobile phone while driving is prohibited, except to make or receive a phone call or to use its audio/music functions provided the phone:

- ▶ is secured in a commercially designed holder fixed to the vehicle, or
- ▶ can be operated by the driver without touching any part of the phone.

Using a phone as a GPS while driving is prohibited unless it is secured in a commercially designed holder fixed to the vehicle.

All other functions (including video calls, texting and emailing) are prohibited.

Learner and P1 drivers, are prohibited from using a mobile phone at all while driving.

Holding the phone (whether or not engaged in a phone call) is also prohibited. Holding includes resting the mobile on the driver's lap.

### Visual display units

A driver must not drive a vehicle that has a television receiver or a visual display unit operating if any part of the screen is visible to the driver or is likely to distract another driver.

A driver can use a driver's aid (such as a GPS) but it must be an integrated part of the vehicle design, or secured in a commercially designed holder, which is fixed to the vehicle.

The rule relating to securing visual display units or mobile phones when used as a GPS does not apply to motorcycles.



## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. If I have my mobile phone in a holder what am I allowed to do?

If your phone is in a holder you can only use it to make or receive a phone call, for GPS or to use the audio/music function. This means you can touch the body of the phone (whilst it is in a holder) for these functions only. All other functions including texting, video calls, emailing and similar communications are prohibited.

The holder must be commercially designed and manufactured and fixed to the vehicle in the manner intended by the manufacturer.

### 2. Can I still use my mobile phone with an earpiece and a connecting cord?

Yes. Wireless devices (or any hands free device, including earpieces that are connected to the phone via a cord) can be used whilst driving.

You must however ensure that whilst you are using such a device, that you do not hold the phone in your hand, or press any buttons on the phone itself, or touch any part of the body of the phone.

### 3. Where does the phone have to be located if operating via hands free?

The phone doesn't need to be in a holder, but it must not be held by the driver and can only be operated by the driver without touching any part of the body of the phone.

Touching/holding the phone includes being held by, or resting on, any part of the driver's body, but does not include being held in the pocket of the driver's clothing or in a pouch worn by the driver.

### 4. Can I still use my portable GPS device?

Yes, as long as it is secured in a holder fixed to the vehicle.

### 5. Where is the safest place to secure my GPS Device?

VicRoads recommends that drivers secure their GPS systems out of the central field of view. This ensures that the GPS does not obstruct the line of view of the driver.

### 6. Can I use my audio/music player?

A music player such as an MP3 player is not permitted to be used while driving if it contains a visual display that the driver can see.

## Why the change?

These changes will contribute to the Victorian Government's road safety strategy *arrive alive 2008-2017*, which aims to reduce the road toll by a further 30 per cent by 2017.

Reviewing our road rules helps to make sure they are meeting current traffic conditions and assists road users get to where they are going as safely and efficiently as possible.

## More information

For more information about the new road rules visit the VicRoads website at [vicroads.vic.gov.au/roadrules](http://vicroads.vic.gov.au/roadrules) or call 1300 360 745.