

## **Fact sheet:**

# **Mobile Phone Use in Vehicles**

### ***What is meant by hands free?***

In all Australian States and Territories drivers are required to have their mobile phone completely hands-free or mounted in a dock or cradle affixed to the car if they want to talk on the phone while driving.

Australia-wide laws also allow for the use of Bluetooth and hands-free devices which interlink with the vehicle provided the driver does not touch the handset unless it is mounted in a cradle.

### ***So I have hands free let's use the drive as a chance to catch up***

WRONG, just because you have hands free mobile does not mean you should use it in the vehicle. Before making or receiving a call ensure you as the driver are not increasing your risk for a crash. Ensure you understand the risk, the caller knows you're on the phone and your eyes and focus remain on the road. If not, enjoy the drive and call back when you stop.

### ***Besides being a legal requirement why use a cradle?***

Car cradles can be very inexpensive and when attached to the dashboard or windscreen can reduce risks associated with reaching for handsets and help minimise eye time off the road by getting the phone up to the eye line level with the road and within easy reach. Research has shown reaching for objects in cars increases crash risk by 4.8-8.8 times for drivers.

### ***What are the general guidelines for a cradle?***

The cradle must reliably hold the phone in all foreseeable driving conditions and must not interfere with any aspect of vehicle operation. This includes consideration of vehicle safety features such as airbags, visibility of vehicle instrumentation inside the vehicle and visibility outside the vehicle.

No specific recommendation is made regarding a brand or unit that is preferred. There are thousands of units out there and perfectly suitable units can be purchased for well under \$50. However, several commercially available cradle types are NOT suitable.



## PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

### ***What are the unsafe cradle types?***

#### **1. STEERING WHEEL Mount – NOT SAFE**

Pouches that mount the phone on the steering wheel can seem like a reasonable idea but they will almost certainly increase the severity of trauma in case of an accident: airbag performance may be impacted but you will have the phone embedded in your chest or face.

#### **2. FRICTION Mount – NOT SAFE**

Weighted pads, bean-bags, high-friction dash mats, etc., are not a “fixed” mounting option. They represent a potential distraction when they shift during entirely foreseeable driving manoeuvres and an increased trauma risk when they become airborne in the case of a serious accident.

### ***What are not recommended cradle types?***

#### **1. VENT Mount – NOT RECOMMENDED**

Whether vent mounted cradles are “fixed” is debatable and if you lose such a debate with the police could cost you. In addition, vents are almost certainly not designed with this use in mind and any damage to a company vehicle incurred in the use of such a cradle could be placed on the workers responsibility to fix. These mounts are not recommended.

#### **2. SOCKET Mount – NOT RECOMMENDED**

Socket mount units can vary considerably in how well they “fix” the phone but ultimately they do not do so reliably. Once again, to minimize the chances of ending up in a debate with a police officer as to whether or not your phone is “fixed” to the vehicles, these types of cradles are not recommended.



1. STEERING WHEEL Mount



2. FRICTION Mount



1. VENT Mount



2. SOCKET Mount

## PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

### ***What are the unsafe cradle types?***

#### **1. WINDSHIELD Mount**

A windshield mounted unit can certainly provide a “fixed” mount but there are safety considerations in relation to where the unit is mounted. It is illegal to mount the mobile phone such that interferes with the drivers line of sight, therefore should a windshield mount be used it should:

- Bottom right-hand corner of the windscreen, as low as possible, is the recommended mounting location.
- Do not mount it in normal line of sight.
- Do not mount it such that cornering visibility is reduced.

Remember that the primary task here is to drive the vehicle safely, not to have the phone in the most convenient location at the expense of safety

#### **2. CUP Mount**

Especially for vehicles that have cup holders towards the front of the centre console, this can be an excellent way to securely and safely mount a phone. It is not recommended for vehicles where such installation places the phone well off beside the driver (requiring the driver to divert their eyesight & focus significantly from the road ahead).



1. WINDSHIELD Mount



POOR FITMENT



GOOD FITMENT



2. CUP Mount