

Don't let your phone wreck your life



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Mobile phones are designed to grab our attention. Ring tones, vibration, beeps and alerts draw our focus off whatever we were concentrating on. The smarter the phone, the bigger the distraction. On too many work sites and in vehicles there are people distracted by their phone and unaware of the dangers happening around them. Can you resist the pull of your phone? The tips below are designed to save you, your work mates and anyone on site from a phone-related mishap.

What's okay?

- Get clear with your supervisor about when phones are okay to use (in breaks; in safe zones e.g. away from fall risks, suspended/swinging loads and traffic)
- Get agreement from your work mates and supervisor about when the "phones off" times are. For instance, when we have machinery operating; or when we have traffic, mobile plant, overhead or underground services to watch out for; when there are suspended loads or work at height; when there are ignition risks or delicate operations
- Call a "phones off" moment when you're concerned a call, text, Facebook message or other mobile interruption will jeopardise safety
- Let your partner, friends or others who call you know that you won't answer when there's a safety risk
- Turn on message bank and use it
- Use "Airplane Mode" (aka "Flight Mode") to switch off/on incoming calls, texts, emails and social media without the time constraint of powering up or down

What's not okay?

- Allowing bad phone habits to go on uninterrupted on a site, project, job or work crew
- Staying silent when others are abusing and risking your safety with their unsafe or disrespectful phone/social media habits - speak up; object; give them a razz; let them know: "it's not okay"
- Dropping your standards and falling into bad phone habits 'because everyone else does'
- Being a 'phone nazi' and over doing it when there's no significant risk or no rule broken
- Texting or reading while walking, especially downstairs or near trip and fall hazards
- Texting or reading while driving

What can you do?

- Get honest with yourself about your phone habits - are they putting you at risk? How often?
- Commit to yourself to break the bad habits; let your mates or partner know that's what you've decided to do (so there are no surprises when you don't answer or respond like you used to)
- Build good phone habits - use the above tips to inform what will work for you
- Open up the conversation about phones and safety at your next toolbox or work group meeting - everyone knows it's wrong, but if no-one says anything we're just riding our luck; and what do we know about luck? Yep. It runs out.
- Discuss phones and safety with your supervisor and manager and get their commitment to set some clear and workable rules or agreements
- If you're having trouble getting through to people watch these videos with them and see what they say (warning one of them is not for the faint-hearted)

YOUTUBE RESOURCES TO WATCH:

A dumb way to use a smart phone:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c3KQmv_figc&sns=em

VW road safety commercial: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JHixeIr_6BM

This YouTube clip is from an English construction site where a fatality occurred. It was made as part of the court's ruling to penalise the employer, SGB/Harsco - they have to make it available worldwide for free to educate workers on the perils of mobile phones being used on site. It's a well made analysis of the "what if's" we get great feedback when we use it in WHS training. Here's the link: www.youtube.com/watch?v=IIMWOa5DH08 - it's 24 minutes long - so give yourself time.

Plus, if your wife or girlfriend or daughter are stuck in bad phone habits while driving... watch this British road safety ad with her (warning! it's not for the faint hearted). The link is: <http://m.youtube.com/watch?list=WL&v=R0LCmStlw9E>

Or if you're just sick of everyone with their heads down, focused on a screen try this one; it's called "Look Up" www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7dLU6fk9QY



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For more information, tools, resources, videos and reminders go to the SafetyCircle website:

safetycircle.com.au