

**PARTNERSHIP
PROGRAM**

Fact sheet:

Mobile Phone Use in Vehicles

What is meant by hands free?

“Hands-free” means a device, or phone, can be used without the need to hold it in your hand.

In all Australian states and territories, drivers are required to operate their mobile phone completely hands-free or mounted in a cradle affixed to the car if they want to talk on the phone while driving.

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

I have hands free so I use the drive as a chance to catch up

WRONG! Just because you have a 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 windscreen or a cup holder can reduce risks associated with reaching for phones 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 available and suitable units can be purchased for well under \$50. However, several commercially available cradle types are NOT suitable.



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Which cradle types are not safe?

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 the case of an accident. Airbag performance may be impacted but the driver will have the phone pushed with sudden and powerful force into their chest or face.

2. FRICTION Mount – NOT SAFE

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

Which cradle types are not recommend?

1. VENT Mount – NOT RECOMMENDED

Whether vent mounted cradles are “fixed” is debatable, however if you lose such a debate with the police it 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 the workers responsibility to fix or pay for. These mounts are not recommended.

2. SOCKET Mount – NOT RECOMMENDED

Socket mount units can vary considerably in how well they “fix” the phone to the vehicle 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

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Which cradle types are recommended?

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 that interferes with the driver’s line of sight. Should a windshield mount be used, the following are important points to note:

- The bottom right-hand corner of the windshield, as low as possible, is the recommended mounting location.
- Do not mount it in normal line of sight.
- Do not mount it so that cornering visibility is reduced.

Remember that the aim is to drive the vehicle safely, not to have the phone in the most convenient location for the driver, at the expense of safety.

2. CUP Mount

Cup mounts can be an excellent way to securely and safely mount a phone, especially for vehicles that have cup holders towards the front of the centre console. However, cup mounts are not recommended for vehicles where installation places the phone well off beside the driver (requiring the driver to divert their eyesight and focus significantly from the road).



1. WINDSHIELD Mount



POOR FITMENT



GOOD FITMENT



2. CUP Mount