

MOBILE PHONE ETIQUETTE

During a performance of the Broadway play *The Lion in Winter* last March, an audience's member mobile phone rang. After putting up with the annoyance for 20 seconds, an actor on the stage stopped the scene and shouted: "Will you turn off that phone, please?" That won him the applause of the public. It hasn't become an organized consumer movement yet, but there are unmistakable signs of a reaction against the 75 million mobile phones in the US. More affordable and easier to use than ever, mobiles keep users in touch whether they are on the road, at the grocery store, or in the middle of a national park.

A mobile phone conversation is not the same as a face-to-face one. For example, it's often louder because people mistakenly think they have to shout to be heard on the other end. On the road, a mobile phone conversation is dangerous. According to a recent study, car phone users are four times more likely to have an accident. Mobile phone users seem to have no idea how rude or careless they can be and many of them do not apologize about their habits. Soon, however, they may find themselves without a choice. For example, the restaurant *The Pillar House* banned phones from its dining room, and several other upper-class Manhattan restaurants are following.

SBC Communications has recently initiated a campaign for a proper mobile phone etiquette. The guidelines are simple: Don't talk during lectures, concerts, plays and movies; use a vibrating phone instead of a ringer; and keep your conversations very short. The penalty for cell phone use while driving can be bodily injury, not just missing a few minutes of a film. Everyone thinks they can handle talking on the cell phone, eating snacks, changing radio stations, and driving at the same time without having an accident. But there's no doubt: it is dangerous.

As a result, more communities are considering laws to limit the use of wireless phones while driving. Thirteen states of the US are considering laws that restrict the use of phones behind the wheel, but only three (California, Florida and Massachusetts) have passed any laws, and none of them is prohibitive, focusing on keeping one hand on the wheel and one ear free for traffic noises. The argument against those laws is that mobile phones are part of people's lives now and that's too difficult to take away. Even those who approve of restrictions admit they are difficult to apply: How do the police prove you were using your phone when you caused that ten-car accident? Critics of restrictions also point to the positive safety features of mobile phones as thousands of people each day use wireless phones to report accidents they witness on the road.

Therefore, and until any definite measures are taken, remember to follow this easy road-related advice: keep your phone close to take it without taking your eyes off the road; avoid using it in heavy traffic and, if you doubt, don't use it at all.

PART A: ACCORDING TO THE TEXT, DECIDE WHETHER THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ARE TRUE, FALSE OR NOT GIVEN.

1. A play at the theatre was stopped for 20 seconds because a mobile phone was ringing.

- a. True b. False c. Not given

2. People who speak on the mobile phone usually speak up.

- a. True b. False c. Not given

3. Talking on the phone while you are driving increases the risk of having an accident.

- a. True b. False c. Not given

4. Most people agree that mobile phones should be banned in restaurants.

- a. True b. False c. Not given

5. Answering the phone while you're driving in Florida is against the law.

- a. True b. False c. Not given

B. CHOOSE THE ANSWER THAT FITS BEST ACCORDING TO THE TEXT.

6. Why are people in the US starting to react against mobile phones?

- a. because everybody can afford to have one.
b. because people use them in inappropriate places.
c. because it causes lots of accidents on the roads.
d. because it's annoying to hear people shouting.

7. What does the text say about mobile users?

- a. they don't know how to use them properly
b. they shout at people all the time without reason
c. they don't care for other people's feelings
d. they tend to be upper-class people

8. A proper use of the mobile phone involves

- a. sending text messages instead of talking
b. avoiding lectures, concerts, plays and movies
c. getting out of the cinema if your phone rings
d. not talking for too long on the phone

9. If your phone rings while you're driving in California

- a. you mustn't take it under any circumstances
b. you have to wear both headphones on
c. you can't use both hands to answer it
d. you must stop the car as soon as possible

10. Why aren't there more laws regulating mobile phone use?

- a. because they can be helpful in some situations
b. because people can't live without mobile phones
c. because people normally use it with caution
d. because US roads are generally safe