

# Are You **TOO** CONNECTED?



More than a billion people worldwide carry mobile phones. Increasingly, individuals have at least one cell phone with them at all times. Some even use them as mobile work stations. Cell phones can keep you connected to friends, family, coworkers, and business contacts. And they certainly come in handy if your car breaks down. But inconsiderate cell phone use can cause problems in relationships and work environments. A little phone etiquette can go a long way toward reducing irritation and stress.

Turn your phone off in places where it's not appropriate to have it on – all public meetings, including church services, weddings, funerals, concerts, movies, and lectures. If you forget to turn off your phone and it rings, quickly silence it and apologize to those around you. ("I'm so sorry. I forgot to turn it off!" – whispered quietly, of course.)

## EVERYWHERE YOU GO

- Do not use your cell phone while you are driving, or call or text people who are driving (for obvious safety reasons).
- Avoid talking in heavily congested places, such as when you are in line at the grocery store, on an airplane or bus, in an elevator, or at a restaurant. If the call is urgent, keep your conversation very short and quiet. It's best to excuse yourself and make or take the call outside.
- Avoid long cell phone conversations when you are with a "live" person. Regardless of what you are doing together – riding in a car or boat, sharing a meal, or shopping – that other person has chosen to spend time with you. Don't devalue that gift by giving attention to someone else.
- Don't talk on your cell phone while you're in a restroom. (Enough said.)
- You don't need to talk loudly to be heard by the person on the other end of the phone. Use a quiet voice.

## ON THE JOB

- Your favorite ring tone can be a distraction and annoyance to your coworkers – especially if you work in an open office area. Set your phone on silent.
- If you are interacting with a customer or coworker and your phone rings or you receive a text – ignore it. The person you are with deserves your undivided attention. The caller can leave a message.
- Never take a personal call or text message during a business meeting – whether you are with a supervisor, coworkers, or subordinates.
- Using your mobile device breaks your concentration. Use your cell phone only for necessary calls – not just visiting – and keep those calls short. You can chat or text on your cell phone during your lunch break, for example, sitting alone at a picnic table outside your office building.
- If you are expecting an important business call and are headed into a meeting, inform the people there that you will need to excuse yourself to take that important call.
- Instruct your children to call you at work only when it's urgent. If your minor child calls, you should, of course, answer the phone.

In some U.S. states, a hands-free cell phone device must be used while driving. In some countries, cell phone use of any kind is prohibited while driving.



Source: AT&T Mobile Connection. 2009.

