



Introduction

Mobile-phone etiquette entails the following simple guidelines, which seek to ensure that mobile phones are used safely, securely, considerately and in such a manner as not to cause offence or disruption to other people.

Courtesy and consideration for others

It is not appropriate or considerate to conduct a private conversation (and by definition ALL conversations are private) in public places (restaurants, bars, theatres, on public transport etc). To avoid causing offence to others, users should activate the 'vibrate' or 'silent' mode on their phone when in public or provide for calls to be diverted to voicemail. If a call is important, the user should leave the public area and seek a private place. Thereafter they should keep the call as short as possible (undertaking to return the call) and/or keep their voice as low as possible. Conversations of a personal, emotional/delicate or aggressive nature should be made in private.

Using a mobile-phone when driving

Using a handset (rather than a hands-free kit) when driving is dangerous and illegal. If calls are to be taken when driving they MUST be taken using a hands-free kit or be diverted to voice mail, or pulling off the road, switch off the engine and answering the call.

Timing

There are many situations in which it would be inconsiderate to allow a mobile-phone to ring (such as at a funeral, in a theatre, mid-conversation or in a business meeting). Before this can occur, the wise mobile-phone user switches the phone to 'vibrate' or 'silent' and returns it at a later time. The majority of in-coming calls are not, in any case, imperative.

Location

Some locations are better for conversations than others; either by virtue of quality of transmission or due to noise or other distractions of a business or personal nature. A wise mobile-phone user ensures that all calls are made under optimum conditions, thus ensuring that ALL calls are made to maximum effect.

Voice modulation

Mobile-phones have sensitive microphones, thus raised voices are not necessary.

Duration

Mobile phones generate a form of radiation known as electromagnetic energy and, whilst the levels



generated by mobile phone use are understood to fall well below the limits set by international watchdogs – it is always advisable to keep the use of mobile phones to a minimum (particularly when they are used without a head-set).

Personal space

Considerate phone users keep a reasonable distance from nearby people when using their mobile phones. Such a habit respects the personal space of others.

Turning the phone off

Optimum mobile-phone use requires discipline and forethought. Users are advised to switch off their phones before an interview, presentation, or boardroom meeting and in such sensitive environs as; courtrooms, theatres, cinemas, places of worship. If a user expects an in-coming call when they know they will be with others/in a meeting – it is polite to inform them and ask their permission to accept the call.

Multi-tasking

Some people are adept at multi-tasking, the majority are not. It is therefore wise to concentrate on the task at hand – be it a phone-call or something else and not to undertake more than one task simultaneously.

Consideration

It is inconsiderate and potentially impolite to take an incoming call for instance, during a conversation or during a social engagement. Such an action implies that the incoming call is more important than the social/personal exchange and is, therefore, impolite. It is better to allow the call to be diverted to voice-mail and attend to it as soon as is considerately possible.

Courtesy when using SMS (short-message-service)

Communicating via text messages is one of the simplest, cheapest, fastest and most effective means of communicating on a mobile-phone. It is, however, also subject to abuse. For optimum text-messaging utilization, users are advised to:

- Avoid composing SMS messages while in face-to-face communication with someone else, when driving or when walking in the street.
- Remember that SMS messages are typically informal and should not be used in formal situations or to replace normal human communication.
- Be aware of the tone and content of the message. SMS messages can be easily misconstrued and, in some cases, cause distress, insult and harm.
- Avoid using complicated language or abbreviations.
- Avoid sending SMS messages at night or early in the morning) since the receipt of same may disturb or irritate the recipient.

SMS bullying

Some people, especially children use mobile-phones to bully others (by sending insulting or threatening messages). In the event that you receive such communications – you are advised NOT to respond, to note the time, date and originator of the call/SMS and pass this information to the police and/or the Service Provider. Children are advised to share the receipt of such messages with their parents/guardians/mentors.