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## The best gift this Christmas is to set your phone

The State's peak motoring body has today launched its Christmas road safety campaign which urged drivers to 'Set your phone, then leave it alone' in a bid to tackle driver distraction this festive season.

RACQ spokesperson Renee Smith said the holiday period was the highest risk time for crashes and driver distraction was a leading cause of the fatalities in Queensland.

"Last year 13 people lost their lives during the festive period, the worst Christmas road toll in a decade," Ms Smith said.

"Every death on our roads is not only tragic but avoidable, particularly when it comes to driver distraction and our addiction to using mobile phones while behind the wheel.

"The reality is you are four times more likely to have a crash when using your phone while driving.

"There are three different types of distraction – cognitive, physical and visual – and using a phone encompasses all of these. Your mind is off the task, your hands are off the wheel and your eyes are off the road."

Last week the Queensland Government announced the penalty for a motorist caught using their phone behind the wheel would increase from \$391 to \$1000.

Ms Smith said RACQ had partnered with the Motor Accident Insurance Commission to educate drivers about the risks of distraction and to encourage them to make a commitment to switch their phones to 'Do Not Disturb' before getting behind the wheel.

"It's a simple function already built into most phones which combats our temptation to touch our device and ultimately removes that distraction from the task of driving," she said.

"We recognise motorists still want to use their phone for functions like music and navigation, so we're asking them to take a couple of minutes to set up their phone then leave it alone.

"Setting your phone only takes a moment and could save a life. The best Christmas present you can give your family is you getting home safely."

**Media inquiries: RACQ spokesperson Renee Smith 0409 573 193, Media Advisor Emma Williams 0447 718 864.**

RACQ is Queensland's largest club and peak independent motoring organisation. We were formed in 1905 to represent the interests of the State's first motorists and today campaign for safer drivers, vehicles and roads on behalf of the 1.7 million members who own the Club. We offer those members a vast range of motoring, insurance, banking, entertainment and travel services and benefits, and each year respond to more than a million calls for roadside assistance.