



# Brock University

## Facilities Management Operating Procedure

Subject: Communications and Electronic Entertainment  
Devices & Headphone Safety

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### Communications and Electronic Entertainment Devices & Headphone Safety

#### Contents

- 1.0 Background
- 2.0 Purpose & Applicability
- 3.0 Implementation
- 4.0 Responsibilities
- 5.0 Training
- 6.0 References

#### 1.0 Background.

- 1.1 Use of Handheld Cellular Phones and Other Electronic Devices. A driver using a cell phone is four times more likely to be in an accident than a driver focused on the road. Other studies show that dialing and texting carries the highest degree of risk of all cell phone-related activities. The Ontario ban on the use of handheld cellular phones and other electronic devices while operating a motor vehicle on a travelled part of a road, regardless of whether the vehicle is in motion at that particular moment, came into force October 26, 2009. Specifically, the operation of a motor vehicle is prohibited while the screen of a television, computer, or other device is visible to the driver. The prohibition extends to cellular phones, dialing, Blackberrys, texting, hand-held GPS's, portable video games, and portable audio and video players. The ban does not apply to the use of the above devices in the hands-free mode or the use of a mobile device to contact emergency services.
- 1.2 Use of Portable Electronic Entertainment Audio Devices with Headphones. The University's Joint Health & Safety Committee believes that safety is compromised around the use of portable listening devices, particularly with ear-buds. The Committee is of the opinion that their use makes people dangerously inattentive to the hazards in their surroundings, plus posing a noise-induced hearing loss risk. Five potential health and safety hazards



## Brock University Facilities Management Operating Procedure

related to the use of audio devices with headphones (including earphones, ear-buds, headsets, etc.,) have been identified (see Annex A):

1.2.1. Reduced Situational Awareness.

1.2.2. Entanglement.

1.2.3. Permanent Hearing Impairment.

1.2.4. Hazardous Materials Exposure.

1.2.5. Electrical Shock.

**2.0 Purpose & Applicability.** This Brock University Facilities Management Operating Procedure (BUFMOP) is intended to communicate restrictions/controls on the use of communications and electronic entertainment devices and headphones by Facilities Management personnel while working. Contractors undertaking work for Facilities Management are expected to adhere to the requirements of this operating procedure. These restrictions are based on a risk assessment of the potential health and safety hazards and the law prohibiting the use of certain communications devices while driving. With respect to 1.2, above, they do not apply to the use of approved and authorized hearing protection equipment that is considered to be personal protective equipment (PPE), assistive listening devices to enhance hearing, or for components that are associated with measuring, monitoring, or sampling equipment necessary for the performance of work-related duties. While this BUFMOP is intended to be consistent with Bill 118 amendments to the provincial *Highway Traffic Act*, the statutory requirements prevail.

### 3.0 Implementation.

#### 3.1 General.

**3.1.1 Use of Handheld Cellular Phones and Other Electronic Devices.** Brock University Facilities Management personnel are to follow the provincial law regarding the use of handheld cellular phones and other electronic devices while operating a vehicle. If so equipped these devices may be used in the hands-free mode. The above devices can be used to contact emergency services, with or without a hands-free capability. For the purposes of this BUFMOP, on or off University property, a vehicle includes for self-propelled cars, vans, heavy equipment, all-terrain vehicles, utility vehicles, golf-carts, etc., along with bicycles.



## Brock University Facilities Management Operating Procedure

**3.1.2 Use of Portable Audio Devices with Headphones.** The use of audio devices with headphones (including earphones, ear-buds, headsets, etc.,) is prohibited while working. During authorized breaks from work, Facilities Management personnel should assess their surroundings to determine if there are any potential hazards arising from the location and time of day where the break from work is taken. As part of that assessment, individuals should undertake those potential controls that they deem most appropriate (see Annex A).

### 4.0 Responsibilities.

**4.1.1 Supervisors.** Assess any hands-free capability requirements that may be requested by Facilities Management personnel on a case-by-case basis and initiate procurement, after obtaining any necessary approvals. Supervisors, in consultation with specialist staff, will address specific situations that may not be included for in this BUFMOP.

**4.1.2 Facilities Management Personnel.** Consistent with the University's internal responsibility system, Facilities Management personnel are to follow the restrictions, statutory or otherwise, provided for.

**5.0 Training.** Facilities Management staff will be provided with training on this operating procedure along with the safe use of handheld electronic devices while operating a motor vehicle.

### 6.0 References

- 6.1 Brock University Human Resources and Environment, Health & Safety - Health & Safety Communication, June 24, 2009: *Audio Devices and Headphone Safety*.
- 6.2 Bill 118, *Highway Traffic Act* Amendments.
- 6.3 *Occupational Health & Safety Act*.
- 6.4 Province of Ontario Bulletins.
- 6.5 Gowlings *OHSLAW* Report, September 30, 2009.

### Annexes

Annex A Brock University HR and EH&S Health and Safety Communication, June 24, 2009: *Audio Devices and Headphone Safety*