

Where Can I Use My Cell Phone! A Guide To Mobile Laws Around The World



Posted **March 18th, 2008** by [Kathryn](#) in [Mobile Phone News](#)

You probably consider your cell phone to be something that's all yours to control right? Think again. Everything we own is limited by the laws of the places where we use those items and cell phones are no exception. For the most part, these laws are designed for our own safety. Really, you shouldn't be text messaging while you drive. But some of the world's cell phone laws definitely verge on infringing on some rights that you might not have thought so much about.



Let's take a closer look at the cell phone laws that are in place around the world:

- **Mobile Phones on the Road.** How many car accidents do you think have been caused because someone was talking on the phone while trying to drive? The majority of the world's lawmakers seem to think that it's quite a few because there are a lot of laws related to what you can and can not do on the phone while you're driving. In the United States, [the rules](#) vary from state to state with some areas banning all cell phone use while driving and others allowing it without restrictions. In the middle of the spectrum are states that have laws banning cell phone use by transit and school bus drivers but not by the average driver and laws that require hands-free headsets. The UK has a ban on cell phone use while driving which started off as punishable by fine but moved up to causing [points](#) against your driving record.



- **Mobile Phones in Hospitals.** There still isn't a whole lot of agreement about whether or not cell phones are bad for your health. While some reports indicate that they might be a cause for cancer concerns, other research studies say that there's no danger to your body caused by using your cell phone. Because there's so much confusion about the topic, it's no surprise that there are conflicting laws around the world about whether or not you can use cell phones while you're inside of the hospital. UK Hospitals have been debating the issue [for years](#). Dutch doctors say that [phones interfere](#) with medical equipment and pose a safety risk to hospital patients.

- **Gaming on Cell Phones.** There are some places that have raised concerns about the issue of playing games on your mobile phone. For example, a few years ago the gaming community in [Greece](#) rebelled against a law that banned all cell phone gaming. The law was based on the fact that online gambling is illegal and that there would be potential for online gambling through mobile broadband. The issue continues to be debated around the world.

- **No Mobiles in Gambling Arenas.** You may not be allowed to gamble online but there are certainly places throughout the world where you are legally allowed to gamble. There has regularly [been talk](#) about banning the use of mobile phones in those locations in order to prevent the problem of illegal betting that sometimes takes place through phone conversations.
- **Mobile Porn.** Do you like the idea of being able to take your porn with you wherever you go? It's not something that you can do on your cell phone in all parts of the world. For example, UK phone service providers abide by a [Code of Practice](#) which labels adult mobile content as "18 and up". The intention is to prevent underage mobile phone users from having access to adult content. Japan has [filtering laws](#) designed to filter web access on mobile phones in a similar fashion. Switzerland has a [ban](#) prohibiting the sale of pornographic films and images through cell phones. People sending any sort of sexually explicit message or image through mobile devices in China – whether or not the individual receiving the message is eighteen – can be fined and even [imprisoned](#) for their lewd behavior.
- **Camera Phone Rules.** It's not just what you download on to your phone that might be a problem. The images that you try to take with the camera on your phone can also get you into a world of trouble depending on where you are located when you snap the shot. The United States has a law called the [Video Voyeurism Prevention Act of 2004](#) which prohibits people from taking nude pictures of anyone else with their cell phone camera unless they have consent (and the person is of legal age to give that consent). In an interesting twist on the issue, hospitals in the US [have had problems](#) with employees taking photographs of patient xrays but there are no laws against this. Regulations limiting photography in the UK raised public concerns and [drew petitions](#) from people who want to be able to use their camera phones anywhere they want.
- **Don't Blow Yourself Up.** Some people don't heed the warnings that you shouldn't talk on your phone while you're pumping gas into your car. For that reason, certain locations have had to make the act illegal. This seems to be a United States problem and not a global issue.
- **Phones in the Air.** As we've mentioned [here](#) on the site before, there is a lot of variation on whether or not you can use cell phones on airlines. The UK has loosened up and is testing out systems that allow both text messaging and voice conversations to take place in air. The United States has a cell phone ban on flights but is working around the issue by starting to allow VoIP through in-air Wi-Fi connections.
- **Cell Phones in Schools.** The fact of the matter is that most kids these days have cell phones. However, there remains a lag in school policy which says that the kids can't bring these phones to class. Most countries don't have laws about this but there's a lot of debate suggesting that some laws should be put in place to allow these kids to have their phones but to prohibit their use from [disrupting class time](#).
- **The Government Can Listen In.** There are a lot of laws around the world related to how much the government can intrude on what you're saying on your mobile phone. The UK has rules in place that allow cell phones to be mined for information in certain criminal cases. The U.S. has had [major issues](#) related to the government's spying habits and legislation is [pending](#) to determine the role of cell phone companies in allowing the government to monitor calls made on cell phones.



- **Stopping Cell Phone Spam.** Spam on cell phones is an increasing problem and lawmakers around the globe are trying to prevent it. Japan has an [anti-spam law](#) that requires people sending cell phone ad messages to offer an "opt out" option. The United States [bans](#) all unwanted commercial cell phone messages. Even [Singapore](#) says that cell phone spam should be illegal.
- **Signal Jamming Laws.** Some people don't like the fact that people are talking on mobile phones around them wherever they go. As a result, someone invented the cell phone jammer. You take this with you and turn it on without others knowing. It jams their cell phone signal and stops the calls. Many places around the world, such as the US, have made these illegal. However, there are some countries that have the opposite law; in France they [allow establishments](#) like movie theaters to install jamming equipment to prevent people from rudely excessive talking on their phones in public places.
- **Mobile Phone Recycling Laws.** There's a strong movement happening around the world to encourage cell phone consumers to be [greener](#) in their habits. Related to that, there are starting to be laws put in place that require cell phone recycling in different ways. For example, California in the U.S. has a [law](#) that requires cell phone retailers to offer free cell phone recycling to their customers. The UK has a [tech recycling law](#) that applies to cell phones and requires manufacturers to partner up with recycling plants to make the process easier for consumers.

Of course, these laws are always changing to adapt to the times. One of the most restrictive mobile phone laws in the world – North Korea's ban on all cell phone use in the country – has [recently been lifted](#). As mobile phones get more advanced, additional restrictions and permissions will probably be placed on their use around the world. Just make sure that you know the rules whenever you're traveling somewhere new with your phone!