



# FACT SHEET #10

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## Cell Phone Safety

Considering the amount of work that farmers do in isolation, a cell phone can be a valuable safety tool – as long as using it doesn't cause an accident! There are a number of things you can do to maximize your cell phone both as a business tool and a safety tool on your farm.

**Cell phone selection.** There are many different types of handsets and services for wireless phones. Give your specific needs careful consideration before selecting your package. For example:

- Check with the various service providers to ensure that you are even within range to use a cellular phone. There are some remote rural areas that are not within service areas for use of cellular phones.
- To date, digital service tends to only cover urban areas and analog service is more effective in rural areas. Perhaps you will want a dual service phone that utilizes both.
- You may need a power point adapter to be installed in your tractor and perhaps an antenna as well to ensure enough power and reception for your cell phone to work properly.
- Small, lightweight handsets have their advantages - but sometimes larger, sturdy handsets with bigger numbers and easy to push buttons, are what you really need.

**Get phone friendly.** Read your manufacturer's operating instructions guide and try out the features of your phone that can make it safer to use. For instance, you can pre-program your most frequently called numbers and then use automatic speed dial to avoid dialing every digit. It's also a good idea to preprogram emergency service numbers for quick and easy access.

**Keep it close.** Keep your phone within comfortable reach, so you can easily pick it up without taking your eyes off what you are doing.

**Don't get distracted.** If you are in the middle of hazardous weather conditions or a difficult maneuver, don't be distracted by the telephone. Hang up if talking takes your attention away from your task. Or, don't answer the phone - that's what voice mail is for.

**You are not an octopus.** Remember, you've only got two hands, so use them to drive – not to flip through phone books. If you know you'll have to make a call while driving, program that phone number ahead of time. If you get a call dealing with important details, ask the caller to phone back and leave a detailed message for you to pick up later.

**Just stop.** If you have to place a quick call, do it when you're temporarily parked. If you must dial when driving, dial only a few numbers at a time; ensuring the area ahead, beside and behind is safe. Always remember to tell everyone you speak with that you are driving - some may surprise you and ask to talk later.

**Tell someone where you are.** For safety's sake, always tell someone where you will be working. If 911 is called, cellular phones do not give emergency services the callers location the way landlines do. If you are working in a remote field and someone knows where you are, then they can assist in getting help more quickly.

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture along with the Farm Credit Canada, the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada want to remind Canadian farmers that a cell phone can be a valuable safety tool when used properly.

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### For more information call:

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