

The message to drivers is simple - switch off before you drive off.

Drive Responsibly

Phones in cars can have many benefits. They provide security and help in an emergency. However, they are distracting if used when driving and this increases the risk of a crash. It is hard to do two things at once and to drive safely you must concentrate on the road.

It is illegal to use a hand-held mobile phone when driving, even when you are stopped at traffic lights or in a queue of traffic. This includes making or receiving calls and/or pictures, text messaging or accessing the Internet. You must pull over to a safe location.

Mobile phones and the law

You would be breaking the law if you picked up or used, any type of phone that is, or must be, hand held to operate it. You may receive a fixed penalty fine of £60 and have 3 penalty points added to your driving licence.

Penalty points can mean higher insurance costs. If you get six points within two years of passing your test, your licence will be revoked and you will need to re-sit the test. If the case goes to court, you could risk a maximum fine of £1,000, which rises to £2,500 for the driver of a bus, coach, or heavy goods vehicle.

You can also be prosecuted for using a hands-free mobile phone if you fail to have proper control of your vehicle.

Drive carelessly or dangerously when using any phone and the penalties can include disqualification, a large fine, and up to two years' imprisonment.

Drivers

Even if you are a careful driver, you will still be distracted by a phone call or text message. Your concentration and anticipation will be affected.

Last year Gloucestershire Police had issued 1,500 fixed penalties to motorists illegally using hand held phones.

Employers

- Do not ask your staff to make or receive calls when they are driving,
- As an employer you may also be prosecuted if you require your employees to use a mobile phone when driving,
- If it is essential for your staff to be contacted when they are driving, tell them to use voice mail, a message service or call diversion and to stop regularly to check messages and return calls.

