



Information Factsheet

Mobile Phone Legislation

Tough new mobile phone laws
to take effect on 27th February

TOUGHER penalties for using hand-held mobile phones while driving will come into force on February 27.

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The same changes are also being made to the penalties for not having proper control of a vehicle - and can be enforced where a driver has been distracted by using a hands-free mobile phone. But, if the police or the driver chooses to take a case to court rather than use a fixed penalty notice, the maximum fine remains at £1,000 (£2,500 for drivers of vans, lorries, buses and coaches).

Transport Secretary Douglas Alexander said: 'Research shows that talking on a mobile phone while driving affects your concentration and ability to react to dangerous situations. It's quite simple - it's impossible to do two things at once and do them well. That is why in December 2003 we introduced new laws preventing motorists from driving while using a handheld mobile.

'We have seen a groundswell of support for this move. But, worryingly, while 92% of people agree with the law, 21% of drivers admit to breaking it. That is why, from February 27, the Road Safety Act will introduce a tougher fixed penalty of three points on your licence as well as a £60 fine.'

Home Office figures for 2004, the latest available, show that nearly 74,000 fixed penalty notices were issued for illegal use of a mobile phone while driving.

Kevin Clinton, RoSPA's head of road safety, said: 'Far too many motorists have been ignoring the mobile phone law and risking their own lives and those of others on the roads around them. We believe the threat of points on a licence and an increased fine will give this legislation new teeth, because those irresponsible people, who think their call is more important than someone's life, are likely to take the threat to their licence more seriously.'

RoSPA would also like to see the use of hands-free phones while driving banned as well, because people are sucked into a conversation and pay less and less attention to the road, resulting in them tailgating, varying their speed and wandering about on the road.

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Sources: DfT/RoSPA:
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