

# Tightening of restrictions on using hand held phones while driving

The UK Government is tightening up restrictions on using hand held phones while driving and has made it illegal to use one in just about all circumstances.

It is already illegal to text or make a phone call using a hand held phone, but from next year the law will also ban drivers from using a phone to take photos or videos, scroll through playlists or play games. Anyone caught doing so will be subject to a £200 fixed penalty and 6 points could be added to their driving licence.

Hands free use of phones is acceptable even for sat nav as long as the phone is in a fixed holder. But this use is tempered with an overall responsibility imposed on drivers to properly control their vehicle.

Transport Secretary, Grant Schapps said: "Too many deaths and injuries occur while mobile phones are being held.

"By making it easier to prosecute people illegally using their phone at the wheel, we are ensuring the law is brought into the 21st century while further protecting all road users.

"While our roads remain among the safest in the world, we will continue working tirelessly to make them safer, including through our award-winning [THINK! campaign](#), which challenges

social norms among high-risk drivers.”

This follows a [public consultation](#) that found 81% of respondents supported proposals to strengthen the law and make it easier for culprits to be prosecuted.

Following the public consultation, the government will now revise [The Highway Code](#) to explain the new measures. It will also be more precise about the fact that being stationary in traffic counts as driving, making it clear that hand-held mobile phone use at traffic lights or in motorway jams is illegal except in very limited circumstances.

There will be an exemption to the new law for drivers making a contactless payment using their mobile phone while stationary to ensure the law keeps pace with technology.

This exemption will cover, for example, places like a drive-through restaurant or a road toll, and will only apply when payment is being made with a card reader. It will not allow motorists to make general online payments while driving.

Mary Williams OBE, Chief Executive of Brake – the road safety charity, said: ‘Driver distraction can be deadly and using a hand-held phone at the wheel is never worth the risk. This important road safety decision by government, coinciding with [Road Safety Week](#), is very welcomed.

“This news is particularly welcomed by families suffering bereavement and catastrophic injury due to drivers being distracted by phones. The theme for Road Safety Week is road safety heroes – we can all be road safety heroes by giving driving our full attention.”