

Massive increase in number of Midlothian drivers not wearing seatbelts

The number of Midlothian drivers caught not wearing seatbelts increased by nearly 500% over the last three months of last year, police have confirmed.

A report discloses that there had also been a significant rise in penalties issued for using mobile phones while driving as well as speeding, while the number of drink driving offences rose by 28%.

Driving incidents between October to December are said to have risen due to road safety work carried out by community officers and the Midlothian Community Action Team (MCAT) .

It revealed that the number of drivers caught without a seatbelt on rose from a five year average of 5.6 to 33 during the third quarter of the year – an increase of 489%.

Drivers fines for using their phones rose from 18.4 to 51 while speeding fines went from 19.8 to 53.

The report to Midlothian Police, Fire and Rescue Board, said: “There have been significant increases in penalties issued for use of mobile phones, speeding and seat belt offences.

“This relates overwhelmingly to speeding and road safety issues undertaken by community officers and the MCAT.

“In response to complaints from the community a number of initiatives have been run, in particular outside schools and in areas where vehicles are prohibited at school drop off times.

“Following periods of education there have thereafter been periods of enforcement which accounts to a high degree for the increase in these detected offences.”

The report goes on to reveal incidents of drink or drug driving had risen by 28% in the last quarter compared to its five year average with 117 incidents recorded.

And it also stated: “This may relate to the time during Covid when there were fewer people undertaking such activity and to the increased powers officers have to detect drug driving.”

by Marie Sharp

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