



Mobile phones, driving and the law

Mobile phones are a constant in most of our lives. But there's one place where you certainly shouldn't be calling, texting, tweeting or anything else and that's in your car. In recent years, mobile phone use has become a huge road safety issue. Read our guide which looks at why it's so dangerous and details the penalties for being caught driving whilst using your phone.

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In a country of around 65 million people, there are around 83 million mobile phones in use. Rather obviously, that's more than one per person. There are also around 38 million vehicles registered for use on UK roads. In some cases, this is a killer combination. Mobile phone use contributes not just to car accidents, but also to deaths and life-changing injuries.

Using a phone or a sat nav when driving

It's illegal to hold a phone or sat nav while driving or riding a motorcycle. You must have hands-free access, such as:

- A bluetooth headset
- Voice command
- A dashboard holder or mat
- A windscreen mount
- A built-in sat nav

The device must not block your view of the road and traffic ahead.

You must stay in full control of your vehicle at all times. The police can stop you if they think you're not in control because you're distracted and you can be prosecuted.

The law still applies to you if you're:

- Stopped at traffic lights
- Queuing in traffic
- Supervising a learner driver

When you can use a hand-held phone

You can use a hand-held phone if either of these apply:

- You're safely parked
- You need to call 999 or 112 in an emergency and it's unsafe or impractical to stop

Penalties

You can get 6 penalty points and a £200 fine if you use a hand-held phone when driving. You'll also lose your licence if you passed your driving test in the last 2 years.

You can get 3 penalty points if you don't have a full view of the road and traffic ahead or proper control of the vehicle.

You can also be taken to court where you can:

- Be banned from driving or riding
- Get a maximum fine of £1,000 (£2,500 if you're driving a lorry or bus)

What should drivers do?

The simplest thing that you can do is not use your phone when driving. If your mobile is too big of a temptation, then simply put it in the glove compartment or switch it off whilst you're in the car. Be aware of other drivers as well, and be prepared to confiscate a phone if you're in a vehicle with someone who insists on using their mobile whilst driving.

Mobile phones are great, and most of us have at least one. But they don't belong in your car. There's no reason to use a phone whilst behind the wheel, and the dangers speak for themselves. It only takes a moment of inattention to cause an accident, and at the end of the day, a text or phone call just isn't worth the risk. Put the phone away and drive. You can catch up with your emails, texts, and social media when you get to your destination.