

Transport Secretary declares zero tolerance for phone use behind the wheel as law changes today

- it is now illegal to use a handheld mobile phone while driving under virtually any circumstance
- government announces £800,000 communications campaign that will soon hit radios and social media
- follows public consultation that found 81% of people supported such a move

From today (25 March 2022), [motorists are breaking the law if they use a handheld mobile phone behind the wheel for any use](#), including to take photos or videos, scroll through playlists or play games – as the government closes a loophole previously exploited by dangerous drivers to escape conviction.

Anyone caught using their handheld device while driving could face a fine of up to £1,000 as well as 6 points on their licence or a full driving ban.

The government's award-winning THINK! team is also today launching an £800,000 awareness campaign to remind drivers not to use a handheld phone at the wheel and of the penalties if choosing to ignore this new law.

Millions of young people will start seeing the adverts in the coming weeks, showing friends appearing in the back seat to intervene when the driver becomes tempted to use their phone behind the wheel.

The campaign will run across video on demand, online video, social media channels and radio in England and Wales until the end of April.

[Hands on the wheel? Hands off your phone](#)

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

I will do everything in my power to keep road-users safe, which is why I am taking a zero-tolerance approach to those who decide to risk lives by using their phone behind the wheel.

I'm ensuring anyone who chooses to break this vital law can face punishment for doing so and we'll continue our efforts to ensure our roads remain among the safest in the world.

Edmund King AA president said:

The AA has long campaigned to make handheld mobile phone use while driving as socially unacceptable as drink driving and we warmly

welcome the new law. This is a much-needed toughening of the rules to help make our roads safer.

Those who believe they can still play with their phone because it's in a cradle must think again – they leave themselves open to prosecution for either careless or dangerous driving.

The best thing to do is to convert your glovebox into a phone box. We all need to keep our hands on the wheel and our eyes on the road.

Drivers are able to make contactless payments, for example, at drive-throughs, so long as their vehicle is stationary. They can also still use a device 'hands-free' while driving if it's secured in a cradle, allowing motorists to use their phone as a sat-nav.

They must, however, always take responsibility for their driving and can be charged with an offence if the police find them not to be in proper control of their vehicle.

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

The law previously only applied to so-called 'interactive communication' such as making a call, as it was written before mobile phones could be used for more complicated tasks, such as taking videos. Previously those caught using their mobiles at the wheel have in some cases been able to escape conviction by claiming that they weren't using them for interactive communication.

The update to the law ensures nobody will be able to use the loophole to escape conviction.

This is the latest move in the government's drive to bolster road safety, with the Department for Transport's £100 million [Safer Roads Fund](#) recently winning the prestigious Prince Michael of Kent International Road Safety Award.