

Mobile Phones and Sat Navs

Mobile Phone Use

It is an offence for the driver to use a mobile phone whilst a vehicle is being driven or is in a stationary position in traffic, unless it is used and activated via some form of hands-free kit fitted in the vehicle (where a hands-free kit is defined as a kit that enables a call to be made or received without the need to hold the handset).

It is possible for the caller, the driver and the company to be prosecuted in the event of an incident that happens when a driver is using a mobile.

Although the company cannot enforce this rule on all staff using their own cars for personal use we would strongly recommend that you leave your phone switched off while driving.

You may seek authorisation to obtain a hands-free set if you use your company mobile phone for business regularly whilst driving.

If you have a company car or have taken the cash alternative and you have a company phone, Next will fit on request, a hands free kit.

Mobile phone law fact file

- Since 1st December 2003, it has been an offence to use a hand-held phone when driving.
 - The penalty as from 27th February 2007 is a £60 fixed penalty and 3 points, or up to £1000 on conviction (£2500 for drivers of goods vehicles, buses or coaches).
 - Drivers still risk prosecution (for failure to have proper control) if they use hands-free phones when driving.
 - A hand-held device is something that 'is or must be held at some point during the course of making or receiving a call or performing any other interactive communication function'.
 - Provided that a phone can be operated without holding it, then hands-free equipment is not prohibited by the new legislation.
 - Pushing buttons on a phone while it is in a cradle or on the steering wheel or handlebars of a motorbike, for example, is not covered by the new offence, provided the phone is not held. However, drivers still face prosecution for failing to have proper control of a vehicle if the hands-free phone is deemed to be a distraction.
 - If there is an incident, the use of any phone or similar device might justify charges of careless or dangerous driving.
- (Source: Department for Transport)

Sat Nav devices

- Sat Nav devices are not 100% foolproof. Always use a map or online service to check your route in outline, so that you have some idea of the direction you should be going in
- Make all the inputs to the unit before setting off and whilst parked in a safe place
- Never attempt to touch the unit to make adjustments whilst driving
- If satellite navigation instructions appear to be unsuitable whilst driving, find a safe place to stop and make the necessary adjustments to re-calculate the route
- Do not solely rely on the Sat Nav instructions for information regarding your safety. You still need to look for signs, road furniture and markings to assist you

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Semi permanent fixing types

- When attaching the mount always position it as low as possible and away from the driver's central field of view, to minimise the area of the windscreen obscured
- Always remove the windscreen mount and navigation unit from the vehicle when left unattended
- Always ensure you wipe the inside of the screen to remove the tell-tale sign that a suction cup attachment has been used – thieves might think the device is hidden on board.
- If a charging lead is used, stow it out of site when the vehicle is left unattended for the same reasons as above
- Small recreational type Sat Nav units can be fitted in mobile phone type cradles – the Road Safety Act regulation with regards to using these whilst driving applies to these units in the same way as mobile phones

Hand Held units

- Never look at or attempt to download information whilst driving
- Ensure the unit is stowed securely in the vehicle whilst driving
- Never leave a PDA or similar device in the vehicle if unattended
- If you need to send or access information via the device whilst in the vehicle, ensure you are parked in a safe place with the engine switched off