



ASSOCIATION OF CHIEF POLICE OFFICERS IN SCOTLAND

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Use

HANG UP YOUR HAND-HELD; HOLD OFF USING HANDS-FREE

ONE YEAR AGO TODAY, tough new penalties came into being for motorists using a hand-held mobile phone while driving.

But since a £60 fine and three penalty points were put in place last year, nearly 500 motorists throughout Scotland have been caught using their hand-held mobile phone whilst driving during three 'Mobile Phone Days of Action' co-ordinated by the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) in conjunction with Scotland's eight police forces.

"It defies comprehension," said Chief Superintendent Mike McCormick, Portfolio Lead for Casualty Reduction for the ACPOS Road Policing Business Area, "that so many motorists still think that they can get away with it after all the public information, days-of-action campaigns and media stories."

Tough new penalties were introduced on February 27, 2007, when the penalty for using a mobile phone whilst driving - already an illegal action - was increased from £30 to £60 and the offence became endorsable, carrying three penalty points.

Scottish police forces will be holding the fourth in a series of "Mobile Phone Days-of-Action" on Wednesday, February 27, to highlight the changes in the law and the need for changes in motorists' attitudes.

"Surely Scottish motorists have had enough time to adjust their driving habits to comply with the new legislation," Mr. McCormick said. "We've had one UK cyclist lose his life due to a motorist text-messaging while driving during the past year. Drivers should also be aware that the penalties apply to anyone who is distracted by a hands-free mobile phone."

Any cases that reach court, in addition to the penalty points, could involve discretionary disqualification and a maximum fine of £1,000 or £2,500 in the case of a driver of a bus/coach or goods vehicle.

"Divert your call, not your attention," Chief Superintendent McCormick concluded. "If you take your eyes off the road or are distracted - even for a split second - due to using your mobile phone, it could result in disastrous consequences. Don't risk it!"

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