

USE IT – YOUR MOBILE PHONE WHILE DRIVING – AND LOSE IT – YOUR LICENCE

Use your mobile phone while driving and you might lose your licence, warn Scottish police on the start of a 24-hour *'mobile phone day of action'*.

With a £60 fine and three penalty points going on their driving licence, some motorists with endorsements could see the courts disqualify them from driving under the totting-up procedure.

In fact, the consequences could be more serious as the courts could consider discretionary disqualification and a maximum fine of £1000 or £2500, if you are a driver of a bus or coach or goods vehicle.

To remind motorists on Scotland's roads again of the risks associated with driving while using a mobile phone or other hand-held device, the country's eight police forces will participate in this year's third 24-hour *'Mobile Phone Day of Action'* on Wednesday, 3 December, being co-ordinated by the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS), starting at 7am.

"Research has shown that drivers using hand-held mobile phones while driving are four times more likely to be involved in a road crash as a result of being distracted," said Chief Superintendent Brian Anderson (Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary), Portfolio lead on Casualty Reduction for the ACPOS Road Policing Business Area. "Research has also shown that reaction times for drivers using a hand-held phone are 30 per cent worse than driving under the influence of alcohol at the legal limit."

Mr. Anderson also stressed that young and experienced drivers have an increased potential for road crashes resulting from driver distraction.

"You can be stopped by police even if you are using a hands-free phone," Chief Superintendent Anderson advised. "If your driving performance is impaired by using a mobile phone in any way that creates an accident risk, you will be stopped."

"The best way to avoid the temptation of answering your mobile phone when driving is to turn it off," concluded Mr. Anderson. "Remember, no call is worth dying for."

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

For interviews with Mr. Anderson on Wednesday, December 3, please contact ACPOS Communications at 0141 435 1241 or 07771 842 881 (mobile).

On the mobile phone day of action held last February, Scottish police officers stopped 324 motorists who were using their mobile phone while driving. In August, 313 drivers were stopped.

Nearly two years ago, in February, 2007, using a hand-held mobile phone or other device while driving became an endorsable (three points) offence and the fine was raised to £60 – up from £30 under the 2003 law which banned used of mobile phones while driving.

And, under a new U.K. road traffic safety law, a driver involved in a road crash while using a mobile phone / hand-held device will go to prison, if someone is killed.

Drivers are advised to switch their mobile phone off while driving; however, if a phone must be kept on, it is recommended to find a safe place to stop and then take the call or call the person back.