



ASSOCIATION OF CHIEF POLICE OFFICERS IN SCOTLAND

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE USE

WINTER WEATHER FAILS TO STOP 271 MOTORISTS FROM USING THEIR HAND-HELD MOBILE PHONES

Roads may have been covered with snow and driving conditions treacherous in some parts of Scotland but despite 271 motorists being stopped by police for using a hand-held phone while driving.

Starting yesterday morning at 7am, all eight Scottish police forces conducted a 24-hour mobile phone '*day of action*', the third and final in a series co-ordinated by the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) this year, to remind motorists not to use their mobile phone while driving as they could lose their licence.

"While we are pleased to see fewer motorists getting caught using their hand-held mobile phones while driving, we are still concerned with the number of motorists who are simply ignoring the law and especially under driving conditions that we have experienced throughout Scotland during the earlier part of the week," said Chief Superintendent Brian Anderson (Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary), Portfolio lead on Casualty Reduction for the ACPOS Road Policing Business Area.

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.

Despite the drop in motorists stopped for using their mobile phone, Mr. Anderson reminded drivers, "You can be stopped by police even if you are using a hands-free phone. Motorists need to remember if using a mobile phone in any way that affects your ability to control your vehicle properly, you will be stopped and reported for the appropriate offence."

"Your reaction times are impaired when using either type of mobile phone while driving and that could result in a fatal or serious road crash," concluded Chief Superintendent Anderson. "Our advice is simple – Don't risk it!"

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

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.

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 use 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.

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.”

Research has also revealed that young and experienced drivers have an increased potential for road crashes resulting from driver distraction.