

MOBILE PHONES FEB 27th

New legislation to increase the penalty for using a hand-held phone whilst driving will come into force on **27 February 2007**. The current fine of £30 will increase to £60 and three penalty points on your licence. Penalty points can mean higher insurance costs. If you get six points within two years of passing your test, your licence will be revoked and you will need to re-sit the test. If the case goes to court, you could risk a maximum fine of £1,000, which rises to £2,500 for the driver of a bus, coach, or heavy goods vehicle.

A driver can also be prosecuted for using a hands-free device if you are not in proper control of your vehicle when using the device. The penalties are the same - £60 fine and three points on your licence.

If you are an employer you can be prosecuted if you require employees to make or receive mobile calls while driving. It is an offence to cause or permit the use of a hand-held mobile phone when driving. It is also an offence to cause or permit a driver not to have proper control of a vehicle.

Callers also play an important role in keeping the roads safe. If the person you are speaking to is driving, please terminate the call and arrange to speak to them later.

Why are the penalties going up?

- It is hard to do two things at once and research has shown that if you are using a mobile phone whilst driving, you are four times more likely to have a crash.
- In fact, if you use any type of mobile be it hands free or hands held, your reaction times are worse than if you were driving under the influence of alcohol. Tests have shown that reaction times for drivers using a hand-held phone slows reactions by 50% when compared to normal driving and by 30% when compared to being drunk (*Direct Line Mobile Phone Report 2002*).
- The use of a mobile phone often involves distractions which could be visual, auditory, mental or physical (*Direct Line Mobile Phone Report 2002*).
- Even if you're a careful driver, it's easy to be distracted by a phone call or text message - and that split second lapse in concentration could result in a crash.