



Dec 21, 2015 14:45 GMT

RAC responds to government plans to discourage motorist mobile phone use

The RAC broadly welcomes a tougher line from the Government on illegal mobile phone use when driving, but it doubts how effective this will be without a corresponding focus on enforcement.

RAC head of external affairs Pete Williams said: “The RAC Report on Motoring this year showed motorists are increasingly worried about other drivers being distracted by mobile phones whilst at the wheel. There is still a surprising number of motorists who think it is acceptable to take a short call with a hand-held mobile whilst driving – it isn’t, and it is a real danger.

“However there is a degree of scepticism about whether tougher penalties will lead to a change in behaviour. The majority of drivers believe there is little chance of being caught for motoring offences other than speeding where they recognise that speed cameras are an effective means of enforcement.

“Our research shows that motorists would rather see more consistent application of existing laws than higher penalties for the likes of mobile phone use. Almost eight in 10 (79%) say there is no point in increasing fines or penalties unless there is effective enforcement, while 62% think there are not enough police on the roads to enforce driving laws. The number of traffic police officers in England and Wales declined by 23% between 2010 and 2014 – a reduction of over 1,279 officers.”

The Department for Transport’s own statistics suggest that 1.6% of the UK’s 38m drivers regularly use a hand-held mobile phone to call, text or browse the internet, but drivers own experience would suggest this is significantly higher and spotting other drivers illegally using hand-held mobile phones is a daily occurrence.

Worryingly, while the number of drivers persisting in using a hand-held mobile phone at the wheel does not seem to be reducing, the number of prosecutions is down 47% from 32,571 in 2009 to 17,414 in 2014.

The press office email address is press.office@rac.co.uk and media centre is at media.rac.co.uk. **Please note:** the press office is unable to help with individual customer enquiries - please visit the [RAC contacts page](#) to find the right contact.

About the RAC

The RAC, an iconic UK brand, provides complete peace of mind to nearly 14 million UK private and business drivers, whatever their motoring needs. As well as its premium nationwide breakdown assistance service – with an expert branded patrol workforce attending more than two million breakdowns every year – it offers a wide range of market-leading products

across insurance, legal services, vehicle inspections and service, maintenance and repair. Included in this is the first-of-its-kind nationwide Mobile Mechanics service which brings the garage to homes and workplaces.

At the forefront of new solutions for business fleets and consumers, the RAC's breakdown service is electric-ready with mobile EV charging technology and can be called on using [myRAC](#) – the all-in-one route planner, fuel finder and breakdown reporting app.

Visit the [RAC website](#).

Contacts



RAC Press Office

Press Contact

press.office@rac.co.uk

Emails monitored during normal office hours. For breakdown queries, call 0330 159 0740

ISDN number on request