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Your New Year's resolution: stop using your handheld phone at the wheel

The RAC is urging motorists to make it their New Year's resolution to stop using a handheld mobile phone while driving.

RAC research highlights that the motoring offence has reached epidemic proportions with its annual [Report on Motoring](#) revealing that attitudes to using a handheld phone when driving have relaxed significantly over the last couple of years. The number of [motorists admitting to using their handheld mobile phone to make a call when driving has increased from 8% in 2014 to](#)

[31%](#) today.

Additionally, there has been a rise in drivers sending a text, email or posting on social media, with the figure increasing from 7% two years ago to 19% in 2016.

The research shows that 48% of drivers admitted to making or receiving a call on their handheld phone when in stationary traffic, 20% said they thought it was acceptable to check social media while sitting in traffic and a shocking 14% confessed to taking photos or recording a video at the wheel.

RAC road safety spokesman Pete Williams said: “If people are struggling to think of what to give up for 2017, we would urge them to stop using their handheld mobile phone when driving. It is the biggest motoring bugbear of 2016 and one that we can well do without.

“Smartphones have become incredibly sophisticated and we now use apps to run many aspects of our lives and keep us in touch and entertained, but for some this has become an obsession. The fear of missing out - or FOMO - is so great that they can’t resist just taking a quick look - but that can be all it takes to lose concentration and make a fatal driving error.

“We all feel pressure to make New Year’s resolutions to lose weight, do more exercise or drink less but perhaps the single most important change every driver could make is to stop using a handheld phone at the wheel. This should be the easiest decision of all, especially as it’s against the law, however the reality is that too many motorists are addicted to using smartphones while driving.

“We believe that, together, we need to force a change and make using a handheld mobile phone when driving as socially unacceptable as drink-driving. While tougher penalties are being introduced in early 2017, we still need more targeted enforcement and greater understanding of the dangers involved. Drivers should also take personal responsibility for ending their addiction. If this is something you’re guilty of, it really is time to stop for good.”

Within a couple of days of the RAC publishing its shocking findings about mobile phone use at the wheel, the Government announced plans to double

the penalty from three to six points and increase the minimum fine from £100 to £200. It also announced a major investment in a THINK! road safety campaign to hammer home the dangers of using a handheld phone to text, tweet, post and browse when driving.

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