



# Fleet Bulletin

## Mobile Phone Use



The following guidance should be followed by all Falkirk Council Fleet drivers with regards to the use of mobile phones when in control of a council vehicle.

Mobile phones are now used in many different ways, including to:

- make and receive calls
- send and read texts
- send and receive emails
- surf the internet
- take, send and receive photos or films
- use apps
- use as a satnav

However, a substantial body of research proves that using a hand-held or hands-free mobile phone while driving is a significant distraction that substantially increases the risk of crashing. Although using a hand-held phone causes the greatest distraction, using a hands-free phone does not significantly reduce the risk. It still causes distraction because the driver is concentrating on two thinking tasks at the same time and often taking their eyes off the road to look at the screen. Drivers who use a hand-held or a hands-free mobile phone:

- are much less aware of what's happening on the road around them
- Often take their eyes off the road altogether to look at the screen
- fail to see road signs
- fail to maintain proper lane position and steady speed
- are more likely to 'tailgate' the vehicle in front
- react more slowly and take longer to brake
- are more likely to enter unsafe gaps in traffic
- feel more stressed and frustrated.

They are also four times more likely to crash, injuring or killing themselves and/or other people.

**It is illegal to use a hand-held mobile phone while driving. This includes using the phone for calls, texts, emails, photos, to go online or for any other reason. The penalty for doing so is a £200 fine and six penalty points.**

**The use of handheld phones is strictly prohibited when driving council vehicles.**

Where it is necessary to make a call the driver must stop in a safe legal place turn the engine off and remove the keys from the ignition.

If your phone rings while you are driving wait until you reach your destination or can stop in a safe legal space before answering as above.

Although using a hands-free phone while driving is not specifically illegal, drivers who do so could be charged with 'failing to have proper control of their vehicle'. The penalty is a fine of up to £1,000, three penalty points and a discretionary disqualification.