



# A third of drivers break law on phones

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**GoCompare Car Insurance** has revealed that 34% of drivers use their mobile phone illegally while in their car, with the figure rising to a shocking 58% of 18-24 year old drivers.

The research reveals that more drivers are tempted to use their phone while waiting in traffic, with the number of drivers using their phone behind the wheel reducing to 25% while actually moving. However, the corresponding figure for 18-24 years olds hardly changes at all - dropping from 58% to 56%.

Nearly a fifth of motorists admitted to checking messages or emails on their phone when sat in a traffic queue, while 13% have used their mobile phone to change music or re-programme their sat-nav phone app.

Those aged 18 to 24 are nearly three times more likely to use their phone to change the music or to re-programme their sat-nav app while driving and nearly twice as likely to illegally make a call with a hand-held device.

Only 32% of the motorists surveyed put their phone out of reach while they are driving.

<b>Drivers' mobile phone use</b>	<b>Waiting in traffic</b>		<b>While moving</b>	
	All drivers	18-24 year olds	All drivers	18-24 year olds



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Using phone in some way	34%	58%	25%	56%
Checking messages or emails	18%	21%	10%	13%
Changing the music played through their phone or re-programming sat-nav app	13%	30%	12%	33%
Making a call on a hand-held device	11%	20%	9%	16%
Writing a message or email	9%	15%	6%	12%
Checking social media	5%	12%	3%	10%
Taking a photograph	4%	5%	3%	7%
Posting a social media update	2%	8%	2%	4%

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Driving laws have prohibited the use of hand-held mobile phones behind the wheel since 2003. Harsher penalties for hand-held mobile phone use while driving were introduced in 2017 to deter motorists from the potentially deadly distraction. The law also applies to stationary vehicles. The only time drivers are permitted to use a hand-held device is when they are safely parked, with their car's engine turned off and the handbrake applied.

The law allows motorists to use a hands-free mobile phone while driving. However, they can still be prosecuted if they are found not to be in proper control of their car or to have been distracted.

Offenders face fines of £200 and six points on their licence. Newly qualified drivers are only



permitted to have six points on their licence in the first two years of driving – so could lose their licence as a result of a single phone call or social media update.

To regain their licence, they must reapply for a provisional licence and can only drive as a learner until passing a further driving test.

Samuel Nahk, spokesperson for **Brake**, the road safety charity, said, “Mobile phone use behind the wheel, in any form, is illegal and highly dangerous and those who do it are selfishly putting other road users’ lives at risk.

“Anything that distracts a driver’s attention from the road, even for a split second, can lead to devastation.

“Using a phone behind the wheel should be as unacceptable as drink driving, with studies showing that reaction times whilst texting are double those of drink-drivers. This new research makes it clear that mobile phone use behind the wheel is all too prevalent and a crackdown is required to rid our roads of this menace.”

Matt Oliver, car insurance expert at GoCompare, added, “It’s over 15 years since driving while using a hand-held mobile first became illegal. In that time, technology has developed rapidly and smartphones have become an invaluable part of most people’s lives – helping us to do everything from communicating, paying for goods and helping us find our way around. And, as our research shows some people are so addicted to their phones they’re prepared to break the law.

“But, using a hand-held mobile phone is one of the most dangerous distractions for drivers. It removes their attention from the road ahead, slows down reaction times and driving one handed can result in the driver not being fully in control of the vehicle – any of which could have potentially fatal consequences for themselves or other road users.”

**Video dangers of phoning and driving**