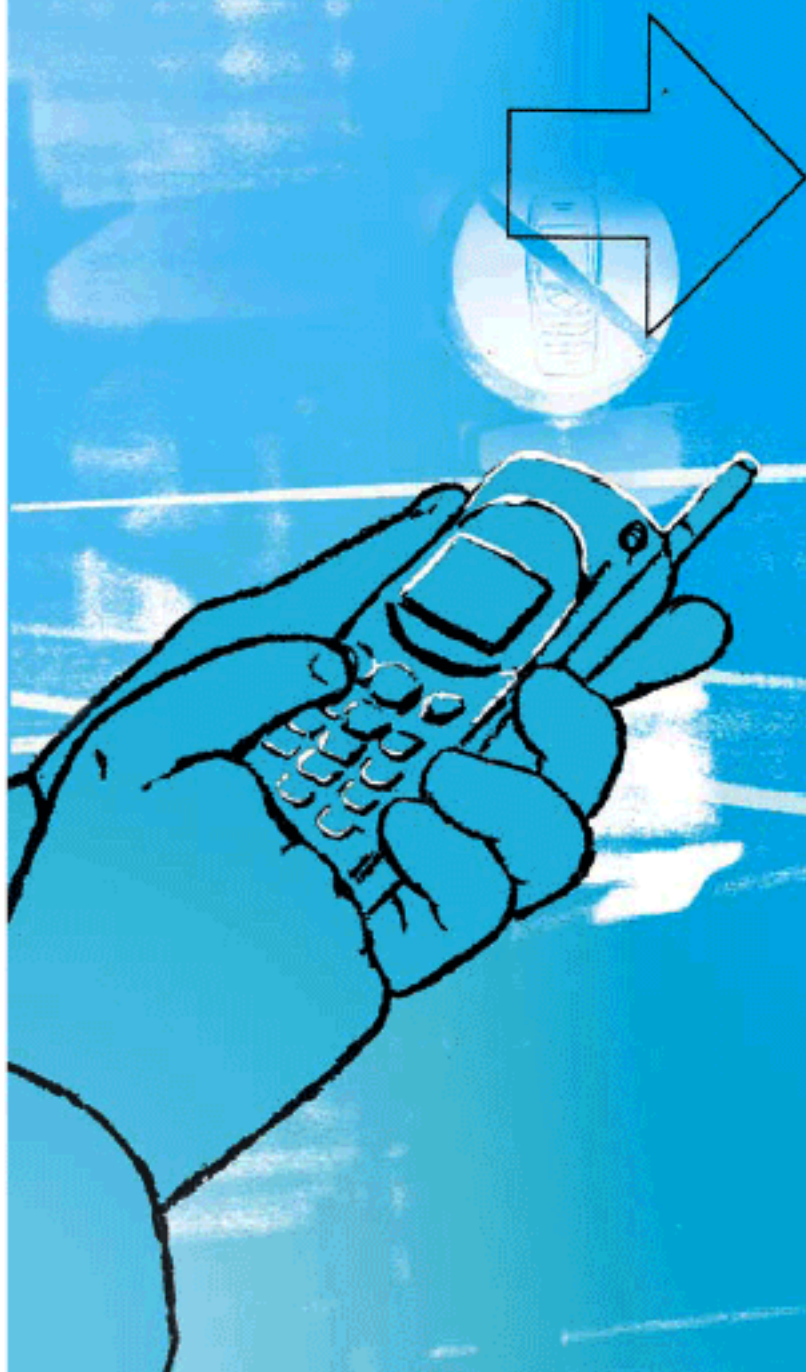


ROAD SAFETY EDUCATION OFFICE
MOBILE PHONES



MOBILE PHONES & DRIVING IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Drive Responsibly

Phones in cars have many benefits. They provide security and help in an emergency. However, they are distracting if used when driving and this increases the risk of a crash. It is hard to do two things at once and to drive safely you must concentrate on the road.

Switch Off Before You Drive

It is illegal* in Northern Ireland to use a hand-held **mobile phone when driving even when you are stopped at traffic lights or in a queue of traffic. This includes making or receiving calls, pictures, text messages or accessing the Internet. You **MUST** pull over to a safe location.

Risk using a hand-held mobile phone when driving, and you risk a fine.

Mobile Phones and The Law

If you are detected using a hand-held mobile phone whilst driving, you may receive a fixed penalty fine of £60 plus 3 penalty points. This can be increased to a maximum of £1000 (£2500 for drivers of vans, lorries, buses and coaches) if the matter goes to court.

Picking up or using any type of phone or similar device that is, or must be, held to operate it, would be breaking the law.

You can also be prosecuted for using a hands-free mobile phone if you fail to have proper control of your vehicle.

Drive carelessly or dangerously when using any phone and the penalties can include disqualification, a large fine, and up to two years imprisonment.

Drivers

Even if you are a careful driver, you will still be distracted by a phone call or text message. Your concentration and anticipation will be affected.

- It is illegal to use a hand-held mobile when driving.
- Keep your mobile phone switched off when driving and use your voicemail, a message service or call diversion so that messages can be left for you when your phone is switched off.
- Only use your mobile phone after you have stopped in a safe place. Never stop on the hard shoulder of a motorway except in an emergency.
- You may think a hands-free phone will enable you to have control of your vehicle, but your mind will not be fully on your driving. It is not like talking to a passenger who is aware of the traffic conditions and can see what is happening when you are driving.
- Avoid taking calls on a hands-free phone. But if you must, say you are driving and end the conversation quickly. Otherwise you will put yourself and other road users at risk.
- You may use a mobile phone when driving for help in an emergency^{***}. On a motorway it is best to use a roadside emergency telephone, as the emergency services will be able to locate you easily.

Employers

- Do not ask your staff to make or receive calls when they are driving.
- As an employer you may also be prosecuted if you require your employees to use a mobile phone when driving****.
- If it is essential for your staff to be contacted when driving, tell them to use voice mail, a message service or call diversion and to stop regularly to check messages and return calls.

**** From 01 February 2004.

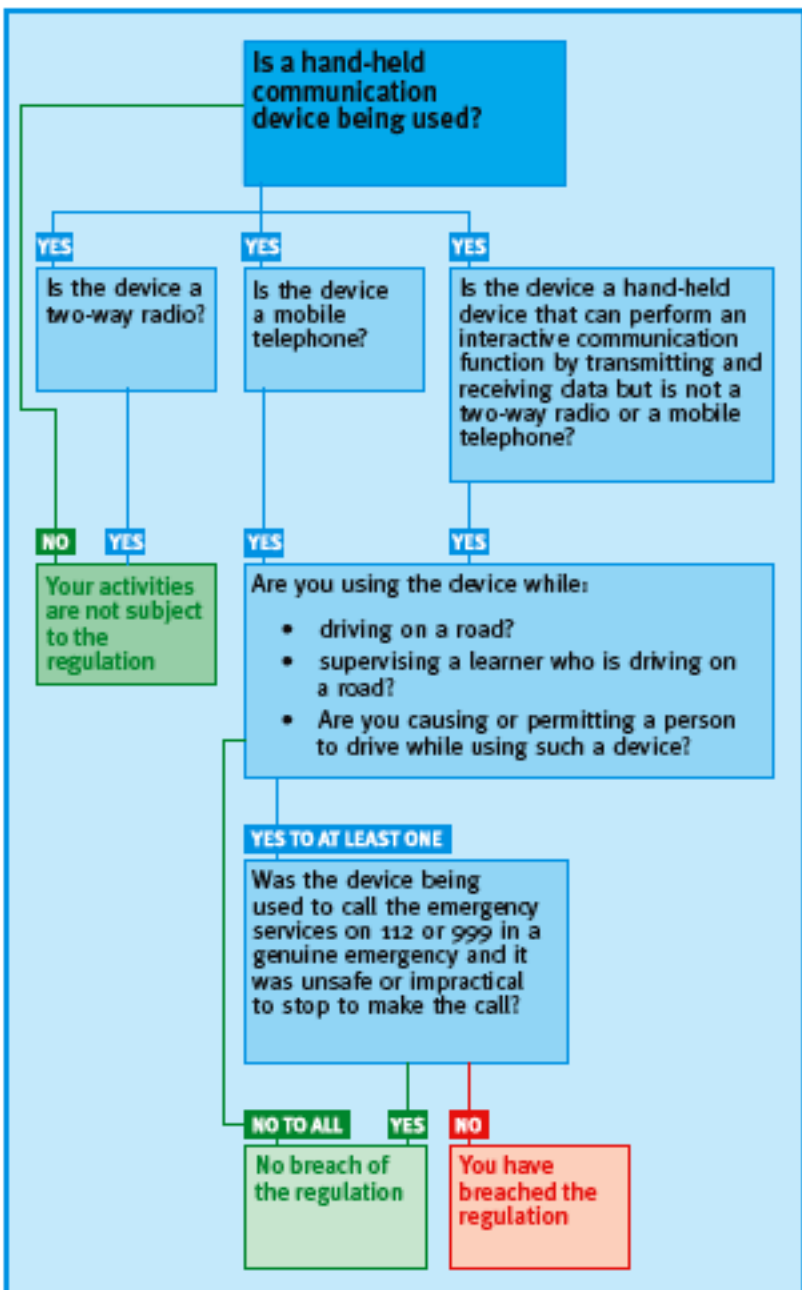
**** 2-way radios are not covered by this offence but other devices for sending or receiving data are included in the offence if they are held when driving.

**** It is not an offence to use a hand-held phone for calling the emergency services on 999 or 112 in response to a genuine emergency when it is unsafe or impractical to stop driving to make a call.

**** It is an offence to cause or permit the use of a hand-held mobile phone when driving or to cause or permit a driver not to have proper control of a vehicle.



What are the Restrictions of using a Mobile Phone whilst Driving?



CONTACTS

Further information on Road Safety may be obtained from the DOE Road Safety Education Offices located at the following addresses:-

Belfast Education and Library Board Area

c/o 40 Academy Street
Belfast
BT1 2NQ
Tel: 028 9050 8181

North Eastern Education and Library Board Area

County Hall
182 Galgorm Road
Ballymena
BT42 1HN
Tel: 028 2564 4311

South Eastern Education and Library Board Area

Hydebank
4 Hospital Road
Belfast
BT8 8JL
Tel: 028 9025 3123

Southern Education and Library Board Area

Library Headquarters
1 Markethill Road
Armagh
BT60 1NR
Tel: 028 3752 0773

Western Education and Library Board Area

Lisnagelvin Crown Building
2 Crescent Road
Lisnagelvin
Londonderry
BT47 2NJ
Tel: 028 7131 9319