

# Landmark Coaches



## MOBILE PHONE POLICY FOR DRIVERS

## **Introduction**

Most people are aware that it is against the law to use a handheld mobile phone while driving a vehicle. Coach drivers not only face police prosecution if caught using a handheld mobile phone, but also further repercussions from their local Traffic Commissioner.

It is important to Landmark Coaches that all of our drivers comply with the law and the requirements of this Safety Policy at all times.

## **The Law**

Since 1 December 2003, under an amendment to the Road Traffic Act 1998, it has been illegal to drive in the UK while using a handheld mobile phone.

While mobile phones may be used in conjunction with hands-free devices, they are ultimately a distraction and a driver using a hands-free mobile phone is still open to a charge of careless driving should a police officer think that they are driving poorly.

The law still applies when you are:

- \* Stopped at Traffic Lights
- \*\* Queueing in traffic

## **Scope**

Every driver employed by Landmark Coaches Limited or Landmark Vehicle Hire Limited will be issued with a copy of this Policy and further copies will be available through our Website at [www.landmarkhire.com](http://www.landmarkhire.com)

## **Penalties for Using a Phone When Driving**

A driver can be issued with an automatic fixed penalty notice if caught using a handheld device while driving. The fixed penalty sees the driver's driving licence being endorsed with three penalty points and a fine of £100.

If the case goes to court, a driver can be disqualified from driving and a HGV or PSV driver could receive a maximum of fine of up to £2500, compared to a maximum fine of £1000 for an "ordinary" motorist.

## **Handheld Device**

It is not only a mobile phone that can see the prosecution of a driver, it goes wider than that. The term “handheld device” covers anything that can be used for making or receiving voice calls or communicating. This can therefore also include iPods, and tablets. Drivers must be aware that communicating back to the Office — messaging / emailing about an onboard problem, for example — would still see them liable for the same prosecution as if they were speaking with a mobile phone.

## **Driving**

Drivers sometimes believe that being stationary, for example at traffic lights or stuck in a large queue of traffic, offers them the opportunity to make or receive a quick call or to read or send a text message. All drivers must be aware that from a legal perspective, they are still deemed to be driving in this scenario, even though their vehicle is not in motion.

Prosecution is therefore still an option for a police officer that witnesses such behaviour.

## **Safety Concerns**

It is proven that using a using a device while driving is a safety risk to other road users.

This risk is clearly magnified when driving a larger vehicle, such as an HGV. Drivers are four times more likely to crash in such cases.

Reaction times for drivers using a phone are vastly affected. An undistracted driver normally has a reaction time of one second, yet the following distractions have some very startling effects on reaction response times which increase as follows:

- Exceeding the drink drive limit — 13%
- High on cannabis — 21%
- Using a hands-free mobile phone — 27%
- Texting — 37%
- Speaking on a handheld mobile phone — 46%

Even careful drivers can be distracted by a call or text — and a split-second lapse in concentration could result in a crash. Department for Transport figures show that a record 378 accidents involving mobile telephones were reported in 2012, causing 548 injuries and 17 deaths.

Landmark Coaches Limited enforce this message that using a mobile phone while driving is unacceptable, both through our Mobile Phone Policy and through our Staff Newsletters. Operators often have clear mobile phone policies in place and draw drivers' attention to them.

### **Disciplinary Procedures**

Landmark Coaches Limited will take any breaches of this Policy very seriously. Any driver found in breach of the law or this Policy is liable to disciplinary proceedings being taken against them.