

Mobile Phones & Safety

Radiation and Mobile Phones

Debate on this issue continues. It is known that mobile phones do emit non-ionising radiation. The current reports from organisations such as the ICNIRP (International Commission on Non Ionising Radiation Protection) state that current knowledge does not indicate that mobile phones, if used in accordance with guidance can cause cancers and other diseases. Companies purchasing mobile phones for employees should ensure that phones comply with ICNIRP standards.



Driving and Mobile phones

Regulations banning the use of mobile phones while driving are on the way. The Government has recently published a Bill to ban the use of hand-held mobile phones while driving. A hand-held device is something that "is or must be held at some point during the course of making or receiving a call or performing any other interactive communication function". The Road Traffic (Mobile Telephony) Bill 2006 has had a second reading in the Dail. The Bill proposes a specific offence of driving while using a hand-held mobile phone.

Apart from the use of mobile phones, mandatory alcohol testing, a new "Court alternative" fixed fine and 6-month driving disqualification for first time drink driving offenders, increased fines and driving disqualification periods, more speed cameras and increased powers to detain vehicles are among the other provisions outlined today in the Government's new Road Safety Bill.



As the current law stands with regard to our penalty point system a driver risks getting five penalty points and a fine of up to €1,500 if the use of a mobile phone causes careless driving. Gardaí can pursue drivers using mobile phones and charge them with careless driving even if no accident has occurred. Gardaí also have the power to check telephone records if they suspect that a driver was involved in an accident whilst using a mobile phone.

Good Practice with regard to mobile phones

All employers who require their employees to drive as part of their work should have a Safe Driving Policy. This policy should include the safe use of a mobile phone.

With regard to driving it is highly recommended that drivers (employees) are prohibited from using mobile phones while actually driving, unless the set is hands free. However it should also be borne in mind that using a hands free kit can distract a driver's attention. The ideal situation is when the driver pulls into a safe position off the road whenever they need to make or receive calls. The driver should put the phone on automatic answering mode, with a message that they are driving and will return the call as soon as possible.

It is also recommended that the mobile phone policy highlights the increased risk of theft and attack when using a mobile and provides guidance in reducing the risk e.g. ensure that your mobile phone is not left visible in your unattended car etc.

