Mobile Phone Law Changes

On 25th March 2022, the law on people using a mobile phone while driving became stricter.

Since 2003, when it became a specific offence to use a hand-held mobile phone or similar hand-held device while driving, mobile phones have developed to be capable of doing more than just make phone calls or send text messages.

As most hand-held mobile phones are now able to take photographs and videos, stream music and films, store books and play games, the law has been updated to reflect this.

The amended regulation will cover any device which is capable of interactive communication even if that functionality is not enabled at the time, for example, because mobile data is switched off or the device is in flight mode.
The definition of 'using' a phone has been expanded to cover the following:

- **illuminating the screen**
- **checking the time**
- **checking notifications**
- **unlocking the device**
- **making, receiving or rejecting a telephone or internet based call**
- **sending, receiving or uploading oral or written content**
- **sending, receiving or uploading a photo or video**
- **utilising camera, video or sound recording**
- **drafting any text**
- **accessing any stored data such as documents, books, audio files, photos, videos, films, playlists, notes or messages**
- **accessing an app**
- **accessing the internet**

Road Safety Wales welcomes this update of the law and recommends that drivers either switch off their mobile at the start of every journey, place it in a signal blocking pouch or put it out of reach in the glove compartment. Using a hands-free system is also likely to distract you from the road. It is far safer not to use any phone when driving or riding.

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Watch Out, Bikers About

With its breathtaking scenery and varied road network, Wales holds a major attraction for both local motorcyclists and those from further afield. In the coming weeks we can expect to see a greater number of motorcyclists using the roads for leisure riding and spring time commuting.

Teresa Ciano, Chair of Road Safety Wales said, "Although Welsh roads are among the safest in the world, a motorcyclist is almost 50 times more likely to be killed or seriously injured in a collision than a person travelling in car. Reducing the number of motorcyclist casualties across Wales therefore remains a priority.

"To address this disproportionate risk, we are asking motorcyclists to ride defensively and always within the law. Drivers can play their part by taking longer to look for motorcyclists, especially when pulling out of junctions, changing lanes or when opening vehicle doors – a motorcycle may not be as visible as a larger vehicle and may be in the space you intend to drive in to.

"Always check your blind spot and look twice for bikes."

While the vast majority of motorcyclists demonstrate a good standard of riding, a small minority choose to use the roads irresponsibly, putting themselves and other road users in danger. Police forces across Wales will target these individuals in the coming months, giving the clear message that poor and anti-social riding behaviour will not be tolerated.

Teresa Ciano added, "Even the most experienced motorcyclist can benefit from post-test training or an assessment of their riding and we are urging motorcyclists to take advantage of the opportunities made available in Wales - many of which are supported with Welsh Government funding - to enhance rider skills and knowledge."

"Before every ride, preparation is key to your safety and this is especially vital if your motorcycle has been sat in the garage over the winter months. Take a close look at your kit and your bike to ensure everything is in full working order, paying particular attention to the condition of the tyres, brakes and lighting - it could save your life. Just as important is ensuring that you are well prepared; never ride angry, tired, or impaired by drink or drugs."

Partners in Road Safety Wales share a common goal - that residents and visitors to Wales use the roads responsibly and arrive home safely.

For further information on safer motorcycling in Wales, please visit WalesByBike.com.

New Funding to Increase Defibrillator Access in Wales

Health Minister Eluned Morgan has announced a further £500k to increase community access to defibrillators, to help improve the survival rates of people who suffer a cardiac arrest outside of a hospital.

The funding will enable community groups, sports grounds and public organisations to access a defibrillator and is a further boost to the £500k announced in September last year. A person's chance of surviving an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest decreases by an estimated 10% with every passing minute. Every year in Wales around 6,000 people suffer sudden cardiac arrest.

Applications for funding can be made at, Save a Life Cymru, a Welsh Government-funded campaign, that helps to raise awareness, fund new educational and CPR training resources and improve public access to defibrillators.

Road Safety Wales Awards

The Road Safety Wales Awards recognise individuals, groups and organisations that have made a real commitment to road safety, above and beyond what would normally be expected of them.

Each year, road safety professionals from across Wales have the opportunity to nominate deserving people to receive an award; those that have demonstrated excellent road safety practice, created innovative projects or made a personal contribution to keeping other people safe on the roads.

Sue Storch, Vice-Chair of Road Safety Wales said: "Even with the enormous challenges we have all faced over the past two years, it hasn't stopped people from going above and beyond to help others in their community.

"These people often have other work commitments, but they have still taken the time and effort to assist with making Welsh roads a safer place for everyone. To show our appreciation, Road Safety Wales is delighted to be able to present five worthy winners with a Road Safety Wales Award along with a cheque for £100."

The award recipients are:

- **Carol Evans, School Crossing Patrol Officer, Pontrhondda Primary School**
- **Pass Wide and Slow, Vale of Glamorgan**
- **Christopher Monelle, School Crossing Patrol Officer, St Gabriel's RC Primary School**
- **Mark Jempson, ADI supporting Pembrokeshire CC**
- **Lisa Brock, School Crossing Patrol Officer, Llangwm**

New 20mph Zones Come to Monmouthshire

New 20mph zones are being introduced by Monmouthshire County Council. The first of these projects will see Abergavenny, Llanfoist, Magor, Undy, Caldicot, Portskewett and Caerwent all lowered from 30mph as part of two Welsh Government funded pilot projects in Monmouthshire.

Plans for the introduction of pilot 20mph zones across Monmouthshire were raised at Monmouthshire County Council's full council meeting last December. This follows the announcement in 2019 by the First Minister that 20mph should be the default speed limit for all residential roads in Wales.

New 20mph zones are also proposed for Monmouth and Wyesham, Mathern, Devauden, Shirenewton/Mynydd Bach and parts of Chepstow. It is also proposed to make the trial Bulwark/Thornwell 20mph zone permanent. The Tintern and Raglan 20mph zones have been extended for a further period of up to 18 months, before the end of which consideration will be given to making them permanent.

The proposals form a key part of the Welsh Government's policy for Road Safety and Active Travel by aiming to create a culture for slower speeds, reducing the number and severity of road casualties, supporting alternative travel modes such as walking and cycling by making the roads less intimidating to non-motorised vehicle users and benefitting physical and mental wellbeing.

Monmouthshire County Council will be consulting on further proposed 20mph zones later in 2022.

For more information, please visit: Introducing 20mph speed limits: frequently asked questions | GOV.WALES

Climate Ambassadors Focus on Active Travel

Community climate ambassadors met with representatives from Torfaen Council recently to discuss plans to increase active travel in the borough.

Road Safety Strategy Officer Pat Bates outlined what the council has done to improve active travel routes since the introduction of the Welsh Government's Active Travel Act and outlined what the authority plans to do over the next few years.

During the presentation, Pat Bates said, "Since 2017 the council has created new walking and cycling routes, improved existing routes, and widened pavements on busy pedestrian routes to school.

"Our long term plan aspires to add 75 miles to the active travel network in Torfaen. This will involve new construction and upgrading of routes, continuing to improve routes with dropped kerbs to make them fully accessible, and working with schools to update school travel plans to make them active school travel plans."

Changes to the Highway Code

Rules for all road users were updated in The Highway Code from Saturday 29 January 2022, to improve the safety of people walking, cycling and riding horses.

A public consultation received more than 20,000 responses from the public, businesses and other organisations, with most respondents supporting the changes.

The introduction section of The Highway Code now includes 3 new rules about the new 'hierarchy of road users'.

The hierarchy has been introduced to ensure those who can do the greatest harm have the greatest responsibility to reduce the danger they pose to others. It does not remove the need for everyone to behave responsibly.

It's important that all road users:

- **are aware of The Highway Code**
- **are considerate to other road users**
- **understand their responsibility for the safety of others**

There will be updated guidance on safe passing distances and speeds for people driving or riding a motorcycle when overtaking vulnerable road users, including:

- **leaving at least 1½ metres (5 feet) when overtaking people cycling at speeds of up to 30mph, and leaving more space when overtaking at higher speeds**
- **passing people riding horses or driving horse-drawn vehicles at speeds under 10 mph and allowing at least 2 metres (6½ feet) of space**
- **allowing at least 2 metres (6.5 feet) of space and keeping to a low speed when passing people walking in the road (for example, where there's no pavement)**
- **wait behind them and do not overtake if it's unsafe or not possible to meet these clearances.**

In total, 9 sections of The Highway Code have been updated, with 50 rules being added or updated.