

Hands-free phones can be as dangerous as drink-driving, says yesinsurance.co.uk



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Industry: [Automotive](#)

Press Release Summary: Car insurer yesinsurance.co.uk report drivers in the UK may be taking risks that can equal those of drink-driving, simply by using hands-free mobile phones

Press Release Body: Up to 8 million drivers in the UK may be taking risks that can equal those of drink-driving, simply by using hands-free mobile phones, according to car insurer, **yesinsurance.co.uk**.

[yesinsurance.co.uk](http://www.yesinsurance.co.uk) (<http://www.yesinsurance.co.uk/>) state that most of the UK's 33 million registered drivers now have a mobile phone and many of them use it whilst driving – either legally using a hands-free kit, or illegally by holding the phone in their hand. Research studies indicate that around 24% of UK drivers occasionally use the phone whilst driving.

However, whilst most drivers are aware that hand-held phones pose a risk, many are unaware that the level of risk is very similar when using a hands-free mobile phone.

"Research conducted at the University of Sydney's Injury Prevention and Trauma Care Division indicates that people who use their mobile phones whilst driving are four times more likely to crash – and this includes people using hands-free devices," said **Paul Purdy of yesinsurance.co.uk**.

In the UK, research conducted at the **Transport Research Laboratory** has found that drivers talking on both hand-held and hands-free mobile phones have on average 30 per cent slower reaction times than those who have been drinking, and 50 per cent slower times than sober drivers.

Similar results were found during tests which were undertaken at the **University of Utah** in the United States, comparing use of hands-free phones and drinking at the UK limit.

"Whilst we would not go as far as calling for a complete ban on hands-free devices, we would like to see the government placing a much greater emphasis on warning drivers that use of a hands-free device can be as dangerous as drinking," said **Paul Purdy**.

In the UK it is illegal to drive a vehicle whilst using a hand-held mobile phone, but hands-free phones are not specifically prohibited. However, legal action can still be taken against drivers who have been using hands-free devices, if it is believed that this has been a contributory factor in an accident.

yesinsurance.co.uk said that research indicates that the combination of visual, auditory, mental and physical distractions caused by using mobile phones can cause a severe deterioration in the ability of the driver to react quickly to changing conditions.

"Conversations with passengers can incorporate periods of silence, but telephone conversations tend to be continuous, requiring a greater commitment in terms of concentration from the driver," said **Paul Purdy**.

"There are also visual clues which can be picked up by drivers and passengers, but these are missing when the conversation is being conducted over a telephone," he said.

At any one time, according to research conducted in 2006 by the **Transport Research Laboratory**, 2.5% of drivers are using the phone whilst driving – with two-thirds of them illegally using hand-held phones. In London the figures were even higher, with 3.7 per cent of car drivers and 4.8 per cent of van drivers being on the phone at any one time.

Latest research results published in June by **America's Ohio State University** indicate that pedestrians are also at increased risk of road

accidents when they are using a mobile phone. Their tests showed that 48 per cent of cell-phone users crossed the road in front of approaching cars, compared with 25 per cent of those not using gadgets. Interestingly, only 16 per cent of iPod users took the same risk.

Commenting on ways to get the message through to drivers, Paul Purdy said:

"We would like to see the launch of a campaign that urges drivers to switch off their mobile phone before setting off on a trip, so that messages can be received by voicemail."

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Editors notes

- Details of **yesinsurance.co.uk** can be found at www.yesinsurance.co.uk
- **yesinsurance.co.uk** is a trading name of **yesinsurance Services Limited**, which is authorised and regulated by the **Financial Services Authority**
- Insurance (<http://www.yesinsurance.co.uk/>) policies provided online at www.yesinsurance.co.uk are designed to provide competitive car insurance (<http://www.yesinsurance.co.uk/car-insurance/>) deals for drivers with cars or vans that are over 5 years old, which account for around 60% of all cars currently on the road, as well as home insurance (<http://www.yesinsurance.co.uk/home-insurance/index.html>) and van insurance (<http://www.yesinsurance.co.uk/van-insurance/index.html>) policies.

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