



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2012-02754

Keyword: Road Policing

Subject: Using a Mobile Phone Whilst Driving

Request and Answer:

This is to inform you that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has now completed its search for the information you requested. The decision has been taken to disclose the located information to you in full.

Question 1

The number of prosecutions made for using a handheld mobile telephone while driving, from the start of January 2007 to the start of July 2012. By this I mean the total number of prosecutions made by your police authority for all types of illegal handheld phone use by motorists in the aforementioned timeframe, including making calls, sending text messages or using a handheld, internet-enabled device at the wheel. Please provide monthly figures if available.

Question 2

The number of these prosecutions that resulted in the driver:

- a) being taken to court,
- b) receiving points and paying a monetary fine
- c) attending an awareness course (if indeed this third option is offered – please clarify whether this is the case).

Question 3

A breakdown, if the information is held, of the number of the prosecutions that relate to speaking on a mobile phone, sending text messages or accessing the internet.

Clarification to Questions 1, 2 and 3

On July 30, 2012 you advised as follows:

I would like to clarify my request, which was perhaps easy to misinterpret. By 'prosecutions' I mean simply the number of people that have been caught using a mobile phone and:

- a) received a FPN
- b) been sent to court
- c) been offered the chance to take an awareness course instead.

Answer

The total number of fixed penalty notices issued for using a hand held phone whilst driving from 1st

January 2007 until 30th June 2012 was 54669.

- a) 49346 received points and paid a monetary fine.
- b) 5323 were taken to court.
- c) There is no awareness course available for mobile phone offences.

Information regarding the specific nature of the use of the mobile phone at the time of the detection is not recorded.

Question 4

The number of awareness initiatives your police authority has worked on since 2007, when the legislation surrounding mobile phone use at the wheel was last modified. For each initiative, please provide details of what was involved, and any tangible results achieved (e.g. a 10% drop in the number of offences).

Answer

Please see the document below which has been provided by the Roads Policing Team and includes information on initiatives employed by PSNI which tackle the misuse of mobile phones whilst driving.

If you have any queries regarding your request or the decision please do not hesitate to contact me on 028 9070 0164. When contacting the Freedom of Information Team, please quote the reference number listed at the beginning of this letter.

If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible, or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter. In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to the Head of Freedom of Information, PSNI Headquarters, 65 Knock Road, Belfast, BT5 6LE or by emailing foi@psni.pnn.police.uk.

If following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision maker, you were to remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request you may make a complaint, under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the PSNI has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act. You can write to the Information Commissioner at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out, however the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Please be advised that PSNI replies under Freedom of Information may be released into the public domain via our website @ www.psnipolice.uk

Personal details in respect of your request have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.

Since the introduction of the legislation for misuse of mobile phones, the PSNI have been committed to informing, educating and enforcing it. A calendar of publicity campaigns has been running for several years, this rotates on a monthly basis, highlighting the offences which are of concern and causation factors of road traffic collisions and driving offences. These road safety initiatives include misuse of mobile phones in the month of April. It again features in November and January when careless/dangerous driving are the main focus.

Adshel advertisements – placed in bus stops, and on the back/side of buses

Advertisements on the television in conjunction with our partners DOE (current ad “respect everyone’s journey”)

Other ads include topics on Careless Driving, mobile phone, speed, and drink drive and pedestrian safety. The previous run of ads included a family who have been affected by the death of their young daughter who had been texting whilst driving.

Road Education Officers* – go to schools, private groups, organisations, sports and social clubs, local communities, local agriculture shows, they deliver specific topics as requested but also take the opportunity to deliver advice on all road safety matters which always includes mobile phones, the dangers and legislation.

Bikesafe, - information and education of motorcycle riding

Live to play,* initiative with GAA road safety for all

Besafe, - a joint initiative with all emergency services and providers of services, ie electricity, water, gas etc – and the dangers surrounding them – primary school children mostly

North West 200, *

Ulster Grand Prix –Circuit of Ireland, *

Young at Heart (over 65’s)*

Young Farmers Clubs of Ulster*

Balmoral Show* - This years event included information on marking and tracking agriculture vehicles

X the text – safety message and discussions around the top 3 causation factors of road traffic collisions.

Belfast Mela – Stand with general road safety message and information for members of the public.

*All include specific road safety as requested and general road safety information which will include information and advice on mobile phones, the dangers and the legislation for members of the public. Talks to groups will be targeted at the age, subject matter and audience.

THE ROADS SAFE ROADSHOW

The Roadsafe Roadshow partnership initiative was conceived in 2001, by Road Education Officers all of whom are experienced Road Policing officers. The concept was born out of a desire to effectively address the carnage on Northern Ireland Roads. It was noted that statistically the 17-24 age group, particularly males were disproportionately over represented in fatal collisions. Officers recognised that the only prospect of success lay in a focused, targeted and joined up approach, involving multiple partner agencies.

Analysis:

Background research studies were conducted with other police services including Australia and New Zealand in order to identify and utilise best practice. Whilst the Roadshow has no equivalent that we know of, it was obvious that the most successful approaches were those involving multiple agencies. The envisaged terms of reference for the programme recognised that whilst proactive enforcement has its place, the key to reducing killed or seriously injured (KSI's) in this target group is to alter the often negative mind set and attitude that exists.

Response:

The Roadshow was designed as the medium to tackle the issue head on. The audience is forced to confront their own mortality and it is not usually lost on them that the only one of the participants is an actor. For the rest, the experiences recounted are both factual and sadly all too real. The approach manages to present a direct message without being dictatorial. The core strength of the show comes from the fact that the PSNI are not seen to take a central role, the actual presentation is by a variety of people including other emergency services, an A&E consultant and individuals who have been personally affected by road trauma.

Assessment:

The Roadshow is a mature project of seven years. It currently takes the form of a professional stage presentation, with a complimentary educational support package, which is accredited by educational authorities. Funding is now stand-alone thanks to external sponsorship from the private sector. To date the Roadshow has reached some 48,000 of its target audience 17 –24 year olds. Ultimately the programme is about saving lives, the Roadshow challenges negative young driver behaviour in a relevant and non-confrontational way. Evidential feedback suggests that this overarching objective is being achieved. The Roadshow has been adopted by authorities in other parts of the UK and the Republic of Ireland and is now adopted as a cross border initiative funded by the European Commission.

Tangible results

Full information on Northern Ireland's Road Safety Strategy can be found on the following:-

http://www.doeni.gov.uk/roadsafety/northern_ireland_s_road_safety_strategy_to_2020_final_version.pdf

Measuring and Ensuring success can also be found on the strategy and on the PSNI web page which includes road traffic statistics and the Chief Constables annual report. Results are not recorded by this department as a statistics are recorded centrally and then produced in the documents on the link below where you can compare year on year.

http://www.psni.police.uk/index/updates/updates_statistics/updates_road_traffic_statistics.htm