



Issue 10 – April 2016

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Use of hand-held mobile phones at the wheel is still rife

In April, the RAC published the results from its online panel survey which reaffirmed that the use of handheld devices at the wheel continues to be a major problem. The findings show:

- 95% of motorists now say they regularly see others interacting in some way with their mobile phone (including glancing at them in stationary traffic).
 - 64% of motorists say that in the last hour they spent driving they saw at least one driver using a handheld phone.
 - Three in 10 motorists admit they have used a handheld mobile phone whilst at the wheel, with 29% admitting they do this occasionally and 1% frequently.
 - In relation to age, just over a third of those surveyed (31%) say they see drivers of all ages committing the offence, however the problem appears to be most prevalent in those under the age of 40 with 50% claiming they most frequently see drivers of this age group on their phones, either in a moving or stationary vehicle.
- In terms of what drivers are admitting to doing when they use their handheld phones at the wheel, our analysis shows that for most, it will be to make a short call. Just under half (49%) of those who admitted using a handheld mobile phone at the wheel stated that they do so to check text messages or emails. (See full table below)

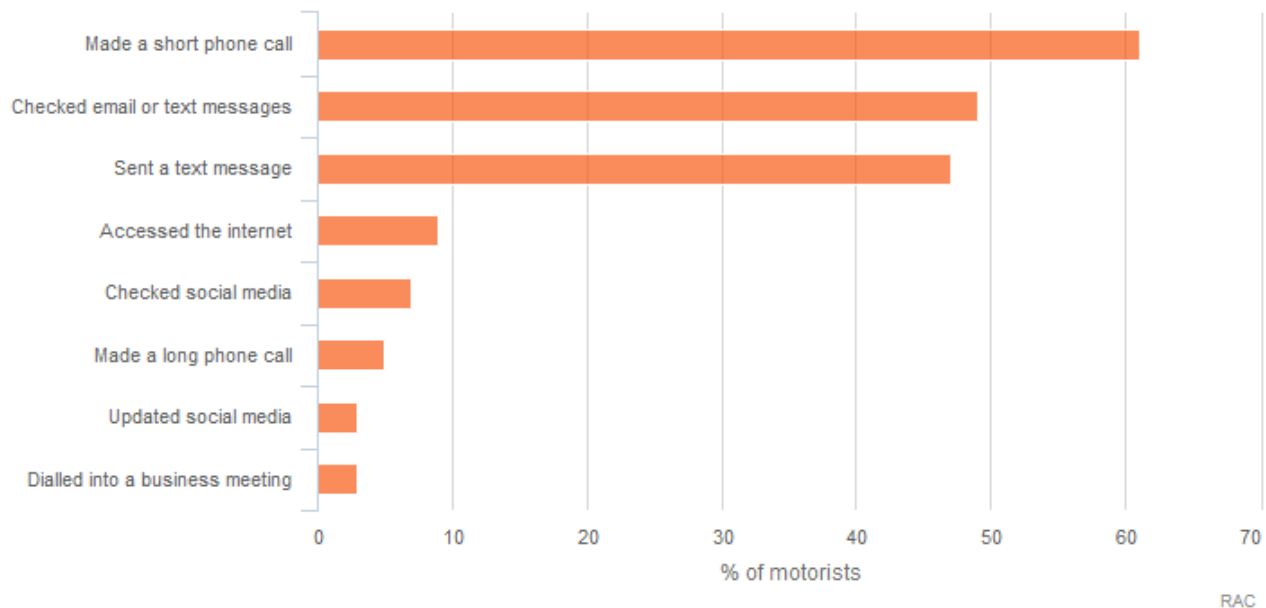


What should be done?

- 1** **Deterrent:** The RAC welcomes the Government's recent consultation to increase the fine to £150 and the penalty points from three to four, but encourages the Government to monitor as to whether this is a sufficient deterrent. Previous attempts by the Government to increase the penalties have had mixed results, with initial falls in those observed using a handheld phone before a steady increase once again ([see report](#)).
- 2** **Enforcement:** Whilst increasing penalties may serve as a deterrent, the inexcusable fact is that between 2010 and 2014, the numbers of dedicated road traffic police officers fell by 23% in England and Wales. Previous [research](#) by the RAC shows that motorists feel that those breaking the law do so because they are simply able to get away with it.
- 3** **Getting the message across:** The RAC is calling for a high-level public awareness campaign to inform drivers, especially young drivers, about the dangers and the distractions associated with using a handheld phone at the wheel.

This could best be done by means of a THINK! campaign, using broadcast, online and social media to target various age demographics. The use of handheld phones at the wheel needs to become as socially unacceptable as drink-driving is.

Which of the following have you done on a handheld mobile phone while at the wheel of a car, either while moving or stationary but with the engine on?



How do motorists feel about residents parking schemes?

In April, the RAC conducted research into motoring opinion on residential parking schemes. The research revealed:

- A 'parking paradox' exists, with nearly half of all motorists (48%) being in favour of them while six in ten (61%) believe they just shift the problem to another area.
- There was a feeling that residents' parking discourages people from visiting an area for shopping and leisure purposes. Half (49%) of those surveyed felt this was a consequence, whereas a quarter (24%) did not think people were deterred from using local shops and leisure facilities.
- The overwhelming majority (77%) wrongly believe the fees are simply another form of general local taxation and that little of the revenue is reinvested in road maintenance and development, with only 14% of those questioned thinking this was how the money was used. Asked how such income should be used, seven in ten (70%) said they would like to see it spent on maintaining and developing roads.

The RAC may have information on the numbers of schemes operating under councils within your constituency*, along with revenue made from such schemes. If you are interested in seeing whether this information is available, please contact Nicholas Lyes, public affairs manager on nlyes@rac.co.uk

*Data is broken down by councils operating schemes, however some councils were unable to provide the information requested via an FOI request made last December, so data may be patchy, or unavailable.

Uninsured drivers – kids as young as 11 caught driving

In April, the RAC published the results of a Freedom of Information request to the DVLA. Within the data we found that nearly 1,000 children were convicted of driving without insurance in 2014. This is a rise of 169 over just two years – despite these individuals not even being old enough to hold a licence. In addition to this, the figures showed:

- The youngest child convicted of driving without insurance was an 11-year-old boy, whereas the youngest female was a girl aged 12. There were 12 boys aged 12 convicted in contrast to just one 12-year-old girl. There were 27 boys aged 13, compared to just one girl aged 13.
- Among those drivers who do not hold a valid UK licence, convictions for driving without insurance remain stubbornly high, rising 6% from 14,466 in 2012 to 15,307 in 2014.

- Even among those motorists **holding full licences**, men are three and a half times more likely to be convicted of driving without a valid insurance policy than women. The highest rise in those driving without insurance was amongst qualified male drivers over 65 years old.

Calls to action:

- 1 In the summer budget 2015, the Government announced plans to look into bogus insurance claims in the motoring sector. The RAC encourages the Government to publish this as soon as possible as part of a review on how best to reduce costs in the insurance sector.
- 2 Insurance remains an extremely high cost for any young motorist, particularly males. The RAC calls on the Government to encourage further telematics take up for younger drivers, including considering a zero rate of Insurance Premium Tax for younger drivers, which has risen twice over the last 12 months.

RAC Fuel Watch

The price of a barrel of oil increased to \$43 by the end of April. Since the low of \$26 a barrel in January, which led to many retailers selling fuel at under £1 per litre, average prices at the pumps have risen to around £1.08 per litre. In April, OPEC failed to agree on a production freeze, which should mean that prices in the short to medium term should remain relatively stable.

YEAR ON YEAR: PRICES CONSIDERABLY LOWER

Year-on-year comparison 27th April 2015 to 26th April 2016

The average UK cost of unleaded on 26th April 2016 was 6.1ppl cheaper than it was on 27th April 2015. This represents a 5.4% price drop in the year. The average UK cost of diesel on 26th April 2016 was 11.4ppl cheaper than it was on the 27th April 2015 representing a 10% price drop in a year.

	27 th April 2015	26 th April 2016
Fuel Type	Average pump price ppl	Average pump price ppl
Unleaded	114.26	108.15
Diesel	119.20	107.76

MONTHLY PRICE COMPARISON: SHARP INCREASE IN COST OF FUEL DURING APRIL

Monthly price comparison 24th March 2016 to 26th April 2016

The average UK cost of unleaded on 26th April 2016 was 4.2ppl more expensive than it was on 24th March 2016. This represents a 4% price rise in a month. The average UK cost of diesel on 26th April 2016 was 3.3ppl more expensive than it was on 24th March 2016 representing a 3.1% price rise in a month.

	24 th March 2016	26 th April 2016
Fuel Type	Average pump price ppl	Average pump price ppl
Unleaded	103.98	108.15
Diesel	104.48	107.76

The facts - the cost of filling a typical family car:

Fuel	Petrol	Diesel
Fuel tank in litres	55	55

Avg forecourt price in pence per litre	108.15p	107.76p
Total cost to motorist	£59.48	£59.27
Duty	£31.87	£31.87
VAT @ 20%	£9.91	£9.88
Cost of fuel	£17.70	£17.52
Exc VAT	£49.57	£49.39
VAT & duty	£41.79	£41.75
% tax of fuel cost	70%	70%

*Source: Experian Catalist – UK prices as of 27th April 2016

For further information, please visit our fuel pages: <http://www.rac.co.uk/advice/fuel-prices-explained>

What is the RAC doing in your constituency?

RAC launches telematics app to improve driver safety

The RAC has launched a new smartphone app to enhance its award-winning telematics product by bringing driver behaviour data, journey history, vehicle health information and engine fault alerts together in one place to support business drivers.

The app will provide RAC Telematics customers with all the information they need to understand what is happening with their vehicles, including detailed journey mileage history that can be used for business expenses or vehicle cost management.



RAC partners with motors.co.uk to improve car search market


RAC Cars and Motors.co.uk have joined forces to create a powerful new advertising partnership that takes competition in the car search market to the next level.

Dealers will be able to access both brands' consumers via a single Motors.co.uk stock feed, saving time and money. Customers will also easily be able to take advantage of the RAC's market-leading range of products designed to improve consumer confidence including vehicle history checks, vehicle inspections, competitive loans, breakdown cover, insurance and the RAC BuySure 82 preparation standard offered by RAC Approved Dealers.

RAC Approved Dealers will enjoy an enhanced package on RAC Cars giving them additional advertising prominence in recognition of the fact that all their vehicles are prepared to this high standard. The first significant development of the new partnership will be the launch of a new RAC Cars website in May, with enhanced functionality and an improved user journey.

As the Motorist's Champion, the RAC is expertly placed to advise and guide effective road and motoring policy. Should you wish to discuss anything within this newsletter or any wider policy issues, please contact:

Nicholas Lyes, public affairs manager on nlyes@rac.co.uk or 07875 423875.

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 Visit: rac.co.uk/publicaffairs