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Royal Mail Group (Royal Mail & Parcelforce Worldwide) - Mobile Phones and Other Mobile Communication Devices - Introduction of Total Ban on 'Hands-Free' Use Whilst Driving:

To: All Branches

Dear Colleagues,

New RMG Policy

This is to inform all CWU Postal Branches, Regions and Regional Health and Safety Committees that Mark Bromhall Royal Mail Group Road Safety Manager has informed the Unions (CWU and Unite/CMA) that the Royal Mail Group Board have approved the proposal to prohibit the use of mobile devices, including 'hands-free' whilst driving. The policy change will apply to anybody driving for Royal Mail regardless of role or rank within the business and will include all vehicles including cars. **The new policy takes effect from Monday 18th June.**

Background To RMG Decision on New Policy

Given the statistics around the impact of mobile device distractions on road casualties, Royal Mail Group has concluded that this is an important step in keeping all of its employees safe and reflects advice provided to Royal Mail Group by organisations such as:-

- RoSPA,
- The Institute of Advanced Motorists
- Brake (Road Safety Charity) and
- RoadPeace (Road Crash Victims Charity).

'Driver distraction impairs control of the vehicle, reduces awareness of what is happening on the road and, through reducing concentration on the task of driving, can contribute to causing an incident or collision.

Research into the causes of driver distraction has identified that both hands free and hand operated use of electronic devices are significant contributors to driver distraction. Research has also shown that drivers are more likely to be involved in a collision whilst using a 'Hands-Free' phone and they can cause almost the same level of risk as driving whilst using a hand-held phone. Studies also show that a driver's reaction time when using a hands free kit can be even slower than when drink driving. If a driver is texting whilst driving, that risk increases dramatically.'

In 2017 a coalition of road safety charities and organisations launched a campaign to prevent distracting alerts while driving. The coalition warned that urgent action is needed to tackle

"the needless deaths and serious injuries caused by drivers using 'hand-held' mobile phones behind the wheel and called for new phone systems to include a 'Do Not Disturb While Driving' mode that detects when someone is driving and turns off calls plus text messages and notifications. The coalition included Brake, RAC, Brighton and Hove City Council, the Parliamentary Advisory Council on Transport Safety, RED Driving School, Road Safety GB and RoadPeace. The charities and organisations also support the law being extended to ban all mobile phone use in the car, including 'Hands-Free' as no phone call or text is worth a life – they say. The group said that the illegal use of hand held mobile phones at the wheel is now at "epidemic proportions", with an estimated 11 million UK motorists admitting to making or receiving a call while driving and a shocking five million saying they have taken photos or videos while at the wheel of a moving vehicle.

In a tragic, landmark legal case in December 2017, a driver using a 'hands-free' device during an "in-depth chat" with a friend, crashed into and killed a motorcyclist. At Lincoln Crown Court, driver Samantha Ayres was jailed for 3 years after she was found guilty of causing death by dangerous driving. The judge John Pini QC also branded 'hands-free phones' used behind the wheel as "dangerous".

In January 2018, Police forces across England and Wales launched a national crack down on drivers using their phones behind the wheel.

Safety No1 Priority

In launching the new Policy, Royal Mail Group has repeated that employee health and safety is the number one priority.

The Law

Whilst UK driving law does not forbid the use of mobiles devices 'hands-free', it does say that drivers must not be distracted whilst driving. If a driver is using a device, even hands-free, their attention can be distracted, and even a moment's distraction can cause accidents, with devastating consequences.

Although it's an offence to be seen using a hand held phone, regardless of whether driving has been affected, this is not the case for hands-free phones. Drivers judged not to be in control of a vehicle while using a hands-free phone can be prosecuted for that offence and receive a fine and penalty points.

Drivers distracted by a mobile device which affects their standard of driving can also be prosecuted for Careless or Dangerous Driving. Where a crash results that causes serious injuries or death, a prison sentence is normally handed down by the courts. Please also be aware that the 'hands-free' use of mobile phones can be, and is, used as evidence to support convictions for careless or dangerous driving, including the very serious charge of causing death by dangerous driving. Sentences for causing death by dangerous driving include a custodial sentence to a maximum of 14 years **(See attached Example Cases).**

Employers can also be prosecuted if they cause or permit a driver to drive while using a phone or to not have proper control of the vehicle, if they require a driver to make or receive calls whilst driving or if their drivers drive dangerously because they're using a phone installed/provided by the employer.

RMG SHE Standards 11.4 and 11.8

See attached copies of the new amended versions of Royal Mail Group's Safety, Health and Environment Standards 11.4 and 11.8. These state that employees must; Never use a mobile phone, PDA other mobile device or anything else likely to cause a distraction whilst driving. This includes the use of devices via Bluetooth or other 'hands-free' connectivity whether for the purposes of making & receiving calls, sending or receiving messages via text,

email or any other format, or the use of the internet, social media or any other similar application. Satellite Navigation devices should be programmed before commencing a journey and never programmed whilst driving. Those making a call to a Royal Mail employee must terminate any call immediately where they identify that the employee is driving.

Management Enquiries

Any Management enquiries should be directed to Mark Bromhall RMG Road Safety Manager
Mobile: 07872 815241 Email: mark.r.bromhall@royalmail.com

Note:

This is a Business decision by the RMG Road Safety Manager and RMG Board, on which the Health, Safety & Environment Department was consulted but it's not an Agreement.

The CWU Health, Safety & Environment Department will support any measure that makes the work of our members safer however, seeking to raise awareness through CWU and Joint campaigns with employers and other safety organisations, government departments and charities through better standards, protection, controls, information, instruction, supervision and training.

Attachments:

- RMG SHE Standard 11.4 'Driver Behaviours and Managerial Controls'
- RMG SHE Standard 11.8 'Grey Fleet Vehicles'
- Example Cases of Convicted and Jailed Drivers Who Killed other Road Users or Pedestrians whilst using a 'Hands-Free' Mobile Phone
- Managers 'Update' Message from Sue Whalley RM CEO
- Message from Gary Simpson MD Parcelforce WW
- RM Colleague 'Update' May 2018 'Mobile Phone Ban For Drivers'
- RoadPeace Mobile Phone Use and Driving Briefing
- Gov.UK - Using A Phone or Sat Nav When Driving - The Law

Footnote:

POL has had this Policy in place for approximately 3 years.

Yours sincerely



Dave Joyce
National Health, Safety & Environment Officer