

CORPORATE SAFETY COMMITTEE – 10TH JULY 2003

SUBJECT: THE USE OF MOBILE PHONES BY DRIVERS

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF THE ENVIRONMENT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of an amendment to the advice previously issued to Directors on the use of mobile phones in Council vehicles.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 A previous report, presented to the meeting of this Committee on 8th November 2002, recommended the prohibition of mobile phones by drivers, whilst a vehicle is in motion.

2.2 The reason for this advice was to ensure that a driver's concentration was not impaired whilst using a mobile telephone.

2.3 In the recent past, the Building Maintenance DLO has purchased a number of "Plug and Go" handsfree kits which can be set to answer calls automatically.

2.4 To activate the system a driver has only to give a verbal acknowledgement of an incoming call before receiving a simple short message, following which the connection is automatically terminated.

2.5 It is considered that the use of this system is unlikely to distract a driver and its use, to send short messages less likely to impair a driver's concentration following a call.

2.6 Whilst the previous recommendation should remain in operation for most drivers, it should be modified to take in vehicles fitted with "plug and Go" and other, similar, systems.

2.7 It is recommended that the advice to the drivers is amended so as to permit those using automatic voice activated equipment to receive short messages only, whilst still prohibiting making of calls by all other drivers, and that staff contacting vehicles fitted with automatic telephone systems are directed to give short, clear, instructions to drivers when it is necessary to contact them only as a matter of urgency.

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