

Careless Driving Laws

5000 inconsiderate drivers



New figures show that more than 5,000 motorists have been stopped under new careless driving laws that came into force six months ago.

The laws allow the police to issue on-the-spot fines and penalty points to drivers for a range of offences, including using a mobile phone while driving, speeding, undertaking, lane hogging, and tailgating.

Like the existing measures for drink-driving and speeding, drivers can also be offered an educational course for some offences.

An exact breakdown of the 5,472 offences was unavailable because not all of the UK's 45 police forces describe the exact nature of offences recorded under the terms 'inconsiderate driving' or 'driving without due care and attention'.

However, the exact details of 600 offences were noted. Of the 600, 154 were for lane-hogging, 84 were for undertaking, 46 were for tailgating and 143 were for drivers deliberately performing wheel spins or handbrake turns.

The figures show that the police are making use of the new careless driving laws to clamp down on driving that is inconsiderate and possibly dangerous without sending cases before a judge.

The government hoped the new laws, which include bigger fines, would offer sufficient punishment and discouragement that the time and expense of court cases would be unnecessary in many cases of inconsiderate driving.

Not all police forces are dealing with careless driving offences in the same way, with some choosing to use traffic offence reports and driver education rather than fines. Five forces that are unable to run education courses due to a lack of facilities are not dealing with inconsiderate driving in an official capacity.