



CHELMSFORD



NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH NEWSLETTER

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ESSEX POLICE

www.chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk

Autumn Edition 2012

PLEASE PASS THIS NEWSLETTER ON BEFORE RECYCLING

Essex, Policing in Action July 2012:-

Essex Police issued **421 fixed penalty notices** to drivers for using a mobile phone while driving. Police solved **102 dwelling burglaries** and 25 other burglaries. **173 cases of criminal damage** were solved. Essex Police solved **21 cases of theft of motor vehicles**.

A series of stop checks in Thurrock and Basildon districts in July has already seen **48 uninsured vehicles** being seized and **388 drivers** fined for having **no MoT certificate**. Five people were also arrested for various offences, including driving while disqualified, burglary and failing to stop for police. Police remind the public that "An uninsured driver will have their vehicle seized until insurance is provided."

In February and March 2012 and following a massive joint Police Service Operation, two separate teams of car thieves were sent to prison. The teams were believed to be responsible for over 100 house burglaries carried out in Essex and Hertfordshire, whereby car keys and cars were stolen. It's believed the value of the cars stolen was in excess of £500,000, all the cars were top-of the range Mercedes, BMWs and Land Rovers and high-performance cars. 18 vehicles were recovered.

This year's don't **drink and drive campaign** ran between June 1, and June 30, 2012 taking a zero tolerance approach to those who put lives at risk by choosing to drink and drive. Of the **2250 drivers stopped** and breathalysed during that period, a total of 110 (4.8%) were found to be driving over the legal alcohol limit or refused or failed to provide a sample. Of those found to be over the limit, 83 (75%) were men and 27 (25%) were women. A total of 15 (14%) were aged under 25 and 95 (86%) were aged 25 and over.

Report suspicious movements of people or vehicles on 101. If you think a crime is occurring phone 999

Home Contents Insurance:

The latest survey indicates that around a quarter of households have no contents insurance at all. National Neighbourhood Watch has teamed up with Towergate Insurance who are offering to beat your current Insurers premiums and then give you a 10 % discount. Call Towergate for Home Insurance for Neighbourhood Watch members on **0844 346 3253** to get a quote or advice, or visit: www.towergatehomeinsurance.co.uk

Outdoor cuisine:

The weather has been kind and I hope you all enjoyed the garden barbeques, the wine and beer. Like many families I have also enjoyed the al fresco dining but have been ever mindful of the open doors and windows. Please check your house and garden security. It's very easy to forget to lock the car, house windows and doors, particularly the rarely used side and back entrances like french and patio doors. Give a thought to the garden perimeter and side gates. Don't forget to put away garden valuables and to set the shed alarm.

On warm nights, close all your downstairs windows before putting the cat out. If you can, set your house alarm for downstairs zone only. Please give a thought to your neighbours when having any outdoor late parties or barbeques, progressively turn the music down as it gets late.

Women's bicycles are back in fashion:

There has been an enormous spike in female bike sales because of the girls GB Olympic bike team success. Currently, three times as many men as women cycle in the UK. This is about to change with a huge range of new women's bikes coming on the market. Victoria Pendleton has recently designed some elegant traditional women's cycles for Halfords.

Always use a decent strong D type lock, to secure your bike.

Are you being distracted whilst driving?

Did you know that if you use a mobile phone whilst driving you are four times more likely to have a crash as your brain will not register hazards or react quickly enough? Using a phone whilst driving will slow down your reaction time by as much as 50%.

THE LAW:-

If you are caught using a mobile phone whilst driving the penalty is:

- A fixed penalty of £60.
- 3 penalty points on your licence.
- If the case goes to court, a maximum fine of £1,000, discretionary disqualification and 3 points.
- Higher car insurance premiums.
- A fine of up to £2,500 for drivers of goods vehicle or passenger carrying vehicles with 9 or more seats.

The penalties above don't just apply to hand-held phones. The same applies to hands-free phones if you are distracted and not in control of your vehicle.

What is distracted driving?

It is any activity which could divert a person's attention from the primary task of driving a vehicle safely. Distractions can endanger passengers, travelling pets, pedestrians, cyclists and other road users.

There are many kinds of distraction:-

- Texting on your phone, using a smart phone or lap top.
- Speaking on a mobile phone, hands free or not.
- Eating and drinking.
- Grooming, putting on eye make-up, or lipstick.
- Reading maps, the paper, books, invoices, and doing reports.
- Using a navigation system, entering information, watching it.
- Watching a TV or video.
- Adjusting a radio, CD player or IPod.
- Talking to passengers and or the children.

It has now been proved that the **worst driver distraction** is text messaging, this can require immense concentration and is known to cause tragic road traffic accidents. Look down for a few seconds at 55 mph and you travel between 60 – 100 metres and not necessarily in a straight line. **“CRASH”**

When can you use a mobile phone in the car?

If you have a hand-held phone you should only ever use it in your car:

- To call 999 in an emergency where it is unsafe or impractical to stop.
- When parked safely with the engine switched off. (remove ign key).
- When you are a passenger.

You must not use a hand-held phone whilst supervising a driver who only has a provisional licence.

What about other mobile devices?

Using other mobile devices for sending and receiving data whilst driving is an offence, this includes Blackberries and Personal Digital Assistant (PDAs) with mobile phones incorporated.

How can a police officer prove that I was on the phone?

If a police officer stops you for bad or poor driving and the offence goes to court, your phone records can be checked to determine whether you were online using your phone.

Did you know?

- Under the New Drivers Act: Receive six or more penalty points within two years of passing your test and you'll lose your licence. You will then need to re-sit your driving test to get your licence back.
- Drivers using a hand-held phone have a 30% lower reaction time than a driver who has been drinking alcohol at the legal limit.
- It's illegal to use a mobile phone stopped at traffic lights or in a stationary traffic queue.
- If you are an employer, you can be prosecuted if you ask employees to make or receive calls while driving.

Extract from the Highway Code No. 150:

You must exercise proper control of your vehicle at all times. Do not rely on driver assistance systems like cruise controls or lane departure warnings. They are available to assist but you should not reduce your concentration levels. Do not be distracted by maps or screen – based information (such as Sat-Navs or vehicle management systems) whilst driving or riding. If necessary find a safe place to stop.

If your phone rings let it go to the message service or call divert – pick up messages when parked safely with the engine off and ignition key removed.