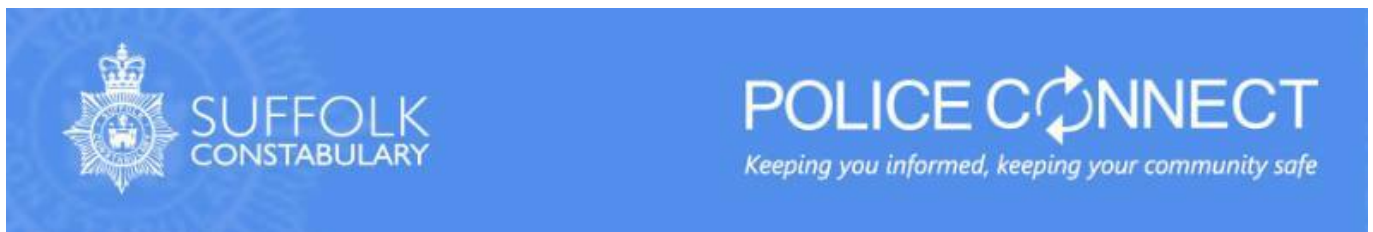


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- [News](#)
- Article

## Warning issued to motorists not to film collision scenes



Suffolk Police is warning drivers about the consequences of filming collision scenes, as several motorists were caught offending during an incident in August.

Following a serious road traffic collision on the A14 - which resulted in the closure of one of the carriageways for several hours - seven motorists driving on the opposite carriageway were caught filming the collision scene as they drove past, four of whom were HGV drivers.

Their details were recorded by officers at the scene and they have all been issued with Traffic Offence Reports for driving without due care and attention.

It is illegal to use a handheld mobile phone whilst driving - or riding a motorcycle - and you must stay in control of your vehicle at all times. Police officers can stop you if they think you are not in control because you are distracted.

Motorists can be prosecuted if they are caught offending and the law still applies if you are:

- stopped at traffic lights
- queuing in traffic
- supervising a learner driver

The basic penalty for driving whilst using a mobile phone is a £200 fine and six points on your licence. Anyone who has passed their driving test in the last two years would lose their licence as a consequence of this.

Alternatively, you might be taken to court which could result in a driving ban and a maximum fine of £1,000 (or £2,500 if you are driving a lorry or bus).

Sergeant Barry Abbott, of the Serious Collision Investigation Unit (SCIU), said: "People in control of a vehicle who film collisions scenes are not only breaking the law, but are also being highly insensitive.

"I know we live in a world where some people want to film everything and post it on social media, but drivers should take a moment to think about the individuals involved in that collision, along with their family and friends.

"Ultimately though, they are committing an offence and if caught will be prosecuted, as this recent example shows. It doesn't matter if you are stuck in slow-moving or stationary traffic, it is still illegal to use your phone whilst behind the wheel - or handlebars if using a motorcycle.

"It is an extremely dangerous act that often results in other collisions. In fact, my Inspector in the SCIU was forced to close the opposite carriageway on the A12 a couple of years ago when attending a serious collision there, as this is exactly what happened.

"If you speak to anyone who has attended the scene of a serious collision – which is something my colleagues & I have had to do on too many occasions – then they will tell you that they are usually a distressing place to be and certainly not something that should be filmed by members of the public.

"It is extremely disappointing that four of the seven people caught in this instance were lorry drivers, as they are professional motorists and should know better. All the drivers involved will now face a financial penalty and could lose their licence depending on how many points they already have, or if they are a new driver."

Tim Passmore, Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk, said: "I absolutely urge all drivers to pay heed to this important message. Using your phone behind the wheel is illegal and using it to film a collision scene is not only highly dangerous, but massively insensitive.

"I am very pleased to see the Constabulary stamping down on this completely irresponsible behaviour and hope it serves as a reminder to all drivers to keep their phones out of reach when they are behind the wheel."

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To report something, or to otherwise contact Police, use the link <http://www.suffolk.police.uk/contact-us>

To report something anonymously call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or visit [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)

Alternatively call **101** for non-urgent matters.

**Always call 999 in emergencies, or if an immediate police response is required.**

Police Connect Team

