

Can't talk – I'm driving

The New Zealand Government is cracking down on the use of cellphones while driving with the introduction of new laws effective from 1 November 2009.

The use of cellphones while driving has become a major factor in serious accidents on New Zealand's roads, leading the Government to introduce a ban that could have major implications for fleet managers.

There were 482 injury crashes and 25 fatal crashes between 2003 and 2008 in which the use of mobile phones or other telecommunications devices was identified as a contributing factor.

From November 1, drivers will no longer be able to talk, text or email from their cellphones while driving. Anyone caught breaching the new laws faces an \$80 fine and 20 demerit points.

While the ban affects every driver – commercial and private – it also has important ramifications for employers who rely on a mobile workforce. Managers need to be aware of how the changes affect them and their drivers – and what to do before the ban comes into effect.

The ban will apply to any portable electronic device, with the following exceptions:

- Cellphones may be used with an appropriate hands-free arrangement as long as no more than one button has to be pressed to make, receive or terminate a call
- Two-way radios are allowed
- Cellphones may be used by a driver when the vehicle has stopped – but not when it is stopped in traffic (including at traffic lights)
- A 111 call in a genuine emergency is allowed
- The prohibition will not apply to enforcement officers.

Health and safety obligations

Already, employers take all practicable steps to ensure the safety of their employees at work, which includes maintaining a safe working environment and dealing with workplace hazards.

From November 1, the use of a cellphone or equivalent while driving becomes a hazard so employers must take additional steps to ensure employees comply with the ban.



Options to consider in reinforcing the non-use of mobile phones while driving should include:

- Ensure employees who are required to drive as part of their job are aware of the law
- Provide employees with a compliant handsfree device or make alternative arrangements for communication
- Avoid calling employees you know are driving and do not have compliant handsfree sets
- Ensure your motor vehicle use policy covers the amendments, including a specific prohibition on cellphone use in breach of the law, and stating that it is an employee's obligation to pay any fine incurred and notify their employer of any instances of breach
- Select a hands-free solution that is appropriate to time spent in the vehicle and the importance of them using their phone while driving: i.e. a sales person who is continuously on the road may be better fitted with a wired in Bluetooth whereas a portable unit may be more suitable for a sales person who uses the vehicle to get to and from work and for travelling to two or three meetings a week.

FleetPartners are currently reviewing the options in the market and will keep you up to date on their findings.

The provisions in the Land Transport (Road User) Amendment Rule (2009) changes effective from 1 November 2009:

1. the ban on the use of hand-held mobile phones when driving
2. the use of special vehicle lanes by vehicles not otherwise allowed on them
3. the correct wearing of seatbelts
4. the use of headlamps on moped and motorcycles during the day
5. allowing cyclists to make a hook turn
6. the use of mopeds or motorcycles on footpaths by postal services
7. the rights and duties of users of mobility devices and wheeled recreational devices
8. exemptions from arm signalling for cyclists at roundabouts
9. towing speeds for vehicles without a rigid towing system
10. parking a vehicle on the road margin
11. child safety locks in taxis
12. the use of blue beacons on vehicles
13. pedestrians waiting at pedestrian crossings
14. passenger service vehicles at level crossings
15. the use of safety chains on light trailers
16. requirements for cycle lights (must be visible for 100m)
17. priorities for use of shared paths

*Q&As are available at www.fleetpartnersnz.co.nz – Resource – Useful information

Managing fleet changes smoothly

Whether it's a result of new economic realities or a desire to go greener, many businesses will be considering changes to their fleet of vehicles.

With such changes issues can arise – staff unhappiness, lengthy transition periods – that can be eased with good management. Here, FleetPartners NZ offers advice for CEO's, CFO's and Fleet Managers facing such a change.

Making changes to a fleet over time is an inevitable process. In recent years, uncertainties created by the Global Financial Crisis and a sharper focus on the benefits of running fleets with lower carbon emissions have forced more businesses to consider making these changes.

If change is a cost-saving measure, this might mean opting to switch to pre-leased vehicles or reducing allowances. If it is with the aim of going greener, it could mean asking staff to drive smaller or less powerful cars. Either way, potential issues can arise if the change is not managed well.

Sandra de Kock, from the Human Resources Institute of New Zealand, says: "The ability to understand the emotions associated with change is a core capability to have in HR. If you have to make changes that will impact on someone's livelihood or their job then there are frameworks you need to work within that can be provided by HR, otherwise you can be exposed to risks.



"You have to look at the impact on people, processes and technology and ensure that all three are addressed in a cohesive, coordinated way. For minor changes it can be as small as getting the best message across, for bigger ones there will be an impact on processes and technology.

"If you build in a change capability so people no longer see change as something scary then you are building an ability to adapt and stay relevant. The risk of not doing this is that the market can change around you and you are no longer relevant."

FleetPartners' Head of Human Resources, Tommy Sim, says changing cars can be a highly emotive issue and the way the transition is handled determines how well they will accept new policies.

"A lot of people see their car as part of a package so view any change as impacting on their remuneration," he says. "It's important to set out the vision for what you are doing otherwise you could face an uproar."

Sandra de Kock suggests following a number of guidelines:

- 1. Buy in from the top:** feedback suggests that if execs bypass new policies then staff see that as the example being set and are unlikely to accept changes
- 2. Engage with staff:** explain the vision behind the change, consult with them, understand their views and treat them with respect. But also manage expectations: a consultation is not a vote
- 3. Understand that changing your fleet may not happen overnight:** some vehicles will have two to three years left on their lease so have policies in place to manage gradual change
- 4. Be flexible:** if you're changing your fleet to be more environmental friendly, consider the option of a financial incentive / disincentive scheme that allows people to exceed the limit – but at a cost
- 5. Review the change:** make sure that the new policies are achieving your aims.

For advice on creating a company policy, talk to your Relationship Manager today!

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A message from Dennis Kelly

Managing Director, FleetPartners New Zealand



Welcome to the Summer edition of FleetView.

As the New Zealand economy begins to show signs that it is emerging from the toughest recession since 1933, FleetPartners NZ is looking forward with confidence and from a position of strength.

While some competitors have struggled to cope with the impact of the Global Financial Crisis, we have adapted and refocused. As a result, while some have contracted, we have bucked the international trend and expanded.

That's not to say it hasn't been a challenging time but, by maintaining an emphasis on being consistent and stable in the market, we have come through in good shape in terms of budget, profit and sales.

We have managed this by understanding what our customers have been looking for in these tough times, by reducing overheads and identifying efficiencies.

We have extended existing contracts and leased back into the market older vehicles after their initial lease has come to an end, a move that has proved extremely popular with existing and new customers.

And, while signs are there that the economy is lifting from the doldrums, we know that customers remain interested in any kind of flexibility and innovation. As a company that makes its decisions in New Zealand and not offshore e.g. the US, Japan, Europe etc, we are light on our feet and can make changes quickly to ensure customers receive low cost solutions.

FleetPartners NZ has also taken the opportunity to recruit some very high calibre people from the market who have brought fresh ideas and great knowledge. Among them is Tony Williams, Chief Operating Officer, who moved to FleetPartners NZ from the UK, bringing with him 25 years experience at the very highest level of leasing in Europe.

Looking ahead, we are spending AUD\$14m introducing a new state of the art systems platform – Drive, that will introduce the latest in telematics reporting and give FleetPartners and our customers and suppliers far greater control over the management of their fleets. The new system will be rolled out in Australia early in 2010 and come to New Zealand later that same year.

For a company of our size to be allocating that amount of money on a significant new system given the economic climate is testament to the faith of the board and shareholders in the viability of the business.

Along with our exciting new partnership with Ecodriver that you can read about elsewhere in this newsletter it is a sign of how strong our business remains and points to a bright future for FleetPartners NZ and our customers.



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Around New Zealand in 80 litres

Highlighting how smart driving can have financial, environmental and road safety benefits

Records are set to tumble when an expert in economic driving attempts to drive a Mini Cooper the length of the country using less than two tanks of petrol.

FleetPartners NZ is sponsoring Ecodriver founder Mark Whittaker's journey from the tip to toe of New Zealand along Highway 1. A specialist driving trainer who is helping FleetPartners NZ teach customers how to improve their fuel economy is embarking on a record-breaking challenge to demonstrate just how far a tank of fuel can go.

Mark Whittaker plans to drive a Mini Cooper D from the tip to toe of New Zealand along Highway 1 using less than two tanks – just 80 litres – of fuel. The aim is to show how a combination of modern technology and driving techniques can provide financial as well as environmental benefits.

Whittaker is the founder of Ecodriver, which teaches driving skills that minimise fuel consumption. He came up with the concept during the 2008 AA energywise rally, a four-day event in which drivers compete to complete a 1641km route for the lowest fuel and road user costs.

"It struck me that no one was promoting or utilising the skills beyond the rally," says Whittaker. "I realised that teaching others, particularly companies with large vehicle fleets, could not only save them money but have a significant environmental benefit."

FleetPartners NZ quickly bought into his ideas for cost-efficient, environmentally-friendly driving, invited him to demonstrate its benefits to staff and were impressed with the results.

"Dennis Kelly could immediately see the logic and benefits and, following trial courses with key staff members, FleetPartners NZ chose to become an official provider of 'Ecodriver fleet saver' courses," says Whittaker.

FleetPartners NZ is also sponsoring his challenge, which starts on December 7 with the goal of setting a fuel economy record using less than 3.0l per 100km as well as promoting safe, responsible and environmentally considerate motoring practices. The Mini Cooper D has been chosen as it is one of the most fuel efficient standard production cars, while he will use Highway 1 as it is a route every Kiwi knows.

FleetPartners are currently investigating the ability to track Mark on his journey via their website and will let you know where to go to view details on his driving style, speed and fuel consumption.



Why FleetPartners NZ has teamed up with Ecodriver

When Mark Whittaker first approached FleetPartners NZ with the concept of Ecodriver, the appeal was obvious. Our customers are always looking for ways of reducing costs and this seemed to offer those reductions – as well as promising benefits for the environment.

"We sent two of our top guys, both of whom are real car fanatics, on one of Mark's courses and they came back and said they had learnt new skills and could see clear benefits for our clients," says Managing Director Dennis Kelly. "It was a very good fit for us."

An outline of the courses that are available will be on the FleetPartners NZ website. They will provide you with tips on driving that could help improve fuel consumption, from setting up vehicles to trip planning and driving smoothly.

"The bottom line is that Ecodriver teaches people good driving behaviour," says Kelly. "The challenge for customers now will be to incentivise their staff to drive as frugally as they can. That way they can save the company money as well as being beneficial from a green perspective."

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face2face

Chris McMillan
Relationship Manager,
Christchurch



The best thing about FleetPartners New Zealand is...

the people I work with. We are a really close knit team in the Christchurch office. We work hard but can also have fun and a good laugh.

When I was a child I wanted to...

be a policeman but after six years in the security industry and seeing people at their worst I decided the force wasn't for me.

When I grow up I want to...

win the Lotto and travel the world. I'm still working on this one.

It's not fashionable but I love...

lying in bed and listening to talk back radio.

If I were a car I'd be...

a very thirsty V8. I'm forever hungry so always need refuelling.

I wish I had never...

I don't believe in having regrets.

If you were to look in my music collection, I wouldn't want you to find...

Justin Timberlake. My wife made me buy it and go to the concert.

My favourite motoring gadget is...

a good car stereo. It makes those long drives for work around the South Island more enjoyable.

My ideal weekend is...

heading out of town for a relaxing weekend away with my wife. She is Australian and enjoys seeing different parts of New Zealand.



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