

Tougher sentences for motorists who kill

Harsher sentencing guidelines for motorists who kill through aggravated negligence or under the influence of drink or drugs will help address distress caused to relatives of victims, says the Federation of England and Wales.

Alan Jones, the Federation's lead on roads policing, said that the new definitive guidelines from the Sentencing Guidelines Council should 'strengthen the courts' hands' to deal with such offences.

He told *Police*: "For too long we have seen the distress caused to relatives when inappropriate sentences, due to lack of powers vested in the court system, have been handed down. We hope these guidelines will now address these issues."

Motorists who use a hand held mobile phone could face even tougher sentences as it will be treated as an aggravating factor.

The Federation will now monitor the affect of these tougher powers and raise concerns if they are not being appropriately applied.

He added that it is key to have enough experienced and trained professional police officers to deal with these kinds of offences and apply the law properly as well as serving as a deterrent to criminals and making sure the service deals with serious collision incidents effectively.

The most recent government figures for the numbers of traffic officers dedicated to policing incidents on the roads in England and Wales stands at 6,412, only 4.5 percent of the total number of officers.

The most serious offences involving persistent bad driving, drugs or alcohol could result in a seven year sentence, with the possibility of 14 years if involving aggravating factors, such as failing to stop.

Peter Neyroud, member of the guidelines council, said the offence of causing death by careless driving recognises the enormous level of harm caused by the offence.

Stick to the law

The Federation is launching a 'know your rights' campaign to inform officers that they could be missing out on crucial money owed to them under police rules and regulations.

A series of know your rights news sheets will be sent out on a monthly basis to officers urging them to abide by police regulations such as those relating to working rest days and overtime and never being properly compensated financially or in days off.

The information will be distributed against a backdrop of the poor pay deal currently being put on the table for police officers of 2.3525 percent, effectively a pay cut in the current economic climate.

Steve Smith, The Federation's deputy general secretary, involved in pay negotiations, said that officers are missing out on claiming money or days' off they are entitled to because forces do not follow the rules and regulations properly.

He told *Police*: "Our officers are saving the government millions of pounds by not claiming what they are entitled to, at least officers are gaining some of the money they are losing through a lack of any decent pay rise."

Mr Smith explained that many forces are constrained by financial budgets and do not always offer officers what they are entitled to, for example, where a constable or sergeant are required to work on their rostered rest day on less than five days' notice they are entitled to compensation at double time.

More than 22,000 police officers took to the streets at a protest in London as part of the Federation's Fair Pay campaign in January.

Although police officers are not allowed to strike they voted to lobby the government for the right to strike at their conference in May this year.

Road deaths: Federation backs tougher sentences



Photography: Police Federation

Rules and regulations: officers miss out on pay



Photography: Shutterstock Inc.