

Supporting materials for Staysafe Committee – Driver Distraction

September 2012

The switch off before your drive campaign was part of the larger “Think” campaign. THINK! is a road safety banner for all campaigns, aiming to create a greater public awareness of road safety issues. According to its website, this initiative “... provides road safety information for road users. Our aim is to encourage safer behaviour to reduce the number of people killed and injured on our roads every year”

The campaign included a multi-media approach with television advertisements promoting drivers to think before driving. In particular the “Switch off before you drive” advertisements with the additional catch cry of “Dying to take the call”. These TV advertisements showed a couple talking on the phone to each other with one in the car and the other at home when suddenly there is the sound of a crash and the driver stops talking. There are no horrific images but just the shock of listening to the silence at the end of the phone line. It illicit a strong emotional response.

There is also an element of this campaign targeting texting which shows a phone and the user “selecting” outcome of texting such as “switch off”, “lose control” injure a pedestrian”, “kill girlfriend” and ending with “switch off “ from the long list of potential outcomes.

There was also a supporting website to the campaign which also has information to help drivers identify the hazards of in car phone use. This approach outlined the rationale as to why using mobile phone use was dangerous and subsequently illegal; the penalties associated and strategies that could be adopted to remember to switch off before you drive. This includes the provision of online games illustrating the complexity of mobile phone use and driving.

Reference:

Department for Transport 2006, ‘Switch off before you drive off’, London

http://think.direct.gov.uk/assets/pdf/dg_195236.pdf