



Established by Act of Parliament

Police Federation of England & Wales

15-17 Langley Road Surbiton Surrey KT6 6LP
Telephone 020 8335 1000 (6 lines)
Fax 020 8390 8998 (General Secretary's Office only)
e-mail gensec@jcc.polfed.org

From the General Secretary's Office

JF/sg

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To: The Chairman, Secretary, All Branch Boards

Dear Colleagues

USE OF HAND HELD MOBILE PHONES & ISSUES RELATING TO AIRWAVE RADIOS

Members will be aware of legislation which prohibits the use of hand-held mobile phones whilst driving a motor vehicle on a road (except in an emergency).

Questions have arisen regarding the status of Airwave radios. These radios are equipped to provide mobile-phone communication and/or two-way radio capability. In some cases the telephony facility on the radio can be "stunned" thereby preventing its use in this mode. The current legislation does not prohibit the use of two-way radios whilst driving. Therefore the legal status of Airwave radios (which have had the telephony facility "stunned") is less than clear.

Advice to members is that Airwave radios should always be regarded as being capable of use as a mobile-phone and therefore should not be used as a hand-held device whilst driving (unless in an emergency situation). All police vehicles should be fitted with "hands-free" equipment allowing the radio to be used by the driver without the need to hold the device.

The hand-held use of Airwave radios by the driver of a police vehicle should be avoided for three reasons:-

- a) the member may be committing a moving traffic offence;
- b) use of an Airwave radio inside a vehicle without the use of a hands-free kit exposes those in the vehicle to higher levels of radio-wave emissions. Where practicable such exposure should be avoided. (Use of a hands-free kit causes

most of the radio waves to be transmitted through an aerial attached to the outside of the vehicle thereby reducing this problem);

- c) use of hand-held devices sets a poor example to the public who would see no perceptible difference between an Airwave set and any other mobile phone.

I hope that you find the above useful and if there are any further comments you would wish to highlight in this respect, please send these to me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Francis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'J' and 'F'.

JOHN FRANCIS
General Secretary