

Satellite Navigation

Using devices safely

Can you use your phone as a sat nav?

Yes. But only if done correctly. Using a sat nav incorrectly could not only land you in trouble with the police, but it puts you, your passengers and other road users at risk.

Drivers must exercise proper control of their vehicle at all times. Using hands-free equipment is still considered a distraction and a risk when driving. Always pull over in a safe place before attempting to program or use your smartphone or sat nav device in any capacity.

Penalties can be issued for holding/touching a mobile phone while driving which apply even when stationary at traffic lights or queuing in traffic.

Things to avoid

Line of sight

Placing a device in your eye-line or anywhere it might obstruct your view of the road could constitute an offence. Windscreens and windows must be kept clean and free from obstructions to vision.



Postcode versus road name

Programming your sat nav using a postcode may not always bring up an exact position. Equally, using a road name may take you to a less than accurate location (i.e. anywhere on a potentially long road, or the wrong road if there are many with the same name).



How to set-up your sat nav safely

Whether you're using a traditional sat nav or an app on your phone, take a look at the tips below on how to safely set-up your navigation before you travel.

Position

Mount your sat nav as low as possible on the windscreen. If using a phone, holster it securely, and on the air vents if possible, so you do not need to hold or interact with it while driving.



Program

Set-up your sat nav before you leave. Make sure the address and location is correct and the audio is turned on. You should not interact with the device once you start driving.



Remember a charger!

You don't want your sat nav to run out of charge and end up lost. Always remember to pack a charger and keep your device plugged in if you're not sure it will last the whole trip.



Newer vehicles often come with Apple Car Play or Android Auto which connect to your device removing the need for a cradle. It is still important to program the in-car app before you travel to avoid distraction when driving.

The importance of journey planning

Journey planning can be the difference between a safe, relaxed trip and a stressful, at-risk journey. Refresh your journey planning skills below with our tips on sat-nav planning.

Check before travel

Keep an eye on the traffic, planned roadworks, weather and anything that may interfere with your travel plans. Complete your pre-drive check before you drive.



Update your maps

Update your maps to minimise the chance of incorrect directions which may cause a distraction. Most sat navs have software and map updates; get the most current one.



Allow extra time

Don't rely on your sat nav's travel time! Reduce potential stress and the temptation to speed when faced with unexpected delays by allotting extra travel time to help arrive safely.

