# Police catch over 30 distracted drivers in Greater Manchester bus operation



Police officers deployed on a Bee Network bus in Greater Manchester recently uncovered over 30 instances of distracted driving, highlighting a significant concern for road safety in the region. This initiative, known as Operation Top Deck, is part of a broader effort by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) to mitigate dangerous driving behaviours that endanger lives and support the ambitious Vision Zero strategy—a commitment aimed at eliminating all deaths and life-changing injuries on the roads by 2040.

As part of the operation, trained officers use elevated vantage points from a bus provided by Diamond Bus to observe and document hazardous driving practices during peak traffic times. This innovative approach allows law enforcement to capture footage of what are referred to as the "Fatal Four" offences: driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, distractions such as mobile phone use, exceeding speed limits, and failure to wear seat belts.

During the latest deployment on 13th May, officers identified a range of infractions, including 17 drivers caught using their mobile phones while driving—one individual was even seen handling two phones simultaneously. An additional seven reports were made regarding individuals not wearing seat belts, some involving young children, and seven further incidents involved vehicles crossing solid white lines. These compliance failures, recorded during a mere two-hour window, underline the ongoing risks presented by inattentive driving.

Dame Sarah Storey, the Active Travel Commissioner for Greater Manchester, commented on the operation's impact, urging drivers to reconsider their actions. “I’d strongly urge that drivers think twice and ask themselves if making a call or answering a text message is really worth the risk,” she stated. “Drivers who use their mobile phones while driving are four times more likely to be involved in a crash.” She also encouraged the public to report unsafe driving behaviours through the GMP’s Operation Snap online portal, which facilitates public contributions to road safety enforcement.

Operation Top Deck draws inspiration from the successful Operation Tramline, another initiative where police have utilised heavy goods vehicles to capture footage of irresponsible driving from a higher perspective. Since its inception in 2015, Operation Tramline has led to over 51,500 reported offences across 35 police jurisdictions in the UK.

Moreover, statistical data reveal a worrying trend regarding driver distractions in Greater Manchester. Over the past decade, the region has witnessed 10,000 fatalities or serious injuries on its roads. Between 2014 and 2024, there have been 1,174 incidents attributed to driver distraction, resulting in 117 serious collisions and 17 fatalities. These statistics underscore the crucial need for consistent and effective enforcement to address the rising tide of distracted driving.

Recent trial efforts by Safer Roads Greater Manchester have also recorded over 3,200 instances of drivers distracted by their mobile phones or improperly restrained by seat belts within just five weeks. Such initiatives highlight the ongoing battle against driver distraction, with 30% of fatal collisions in Greater Manchester in 2018 being linked to this very factor.

In addition to traditional enforcement approaches, Greater Manchester is exploring advanced technology for detecting distracted driving. The region is trialling "Heads Up" technology, which uses artificial intelligence to automatically identify instances of mobile phone usage and seat belt non-compliance in real-time. This proactive measure aims not only to enhance enforcement but also to inform future campaigns focused on reducing collisions and improving compliance.

As road safety remains a pressing issue, initiatives like Operation Top Deck and the use of innovative technologies are paramount in fostering a culture of caution and responsibility among drivers. The commitment to public safety must be a shared responsibility, with both enforcement and education playing critical roles in safeguarding lives on the roads.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://highways-news.com/operation-top-deck-police-deployment-onboard-bee-network-bus-uncovers-dangerous-driving/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=operation-top-deck-police-deployment-onboard-bee-network-bus-uncovers-dangerous-driving), [[2]](https://www.gmp.police.uk/news/greater-manchester/news/news/2025/april/fatal-4---catching-distracted-drivers-in-the-act-as-officers-target-irresponsible-road-users-putting-lives-at-risk/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://highways-news.com/operation-top-deck-police-deployment-onboard-bee-network-bus-uncovers-dangerous-driving/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=operation-top-deck-police-deployment-onboard-bee-network-bus-uncovers-dangerous-driving), [[6]](https://highways-news.com/39782-2/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.gmp.police.uk/news/greater-manchester/news/news/2025/april/fatal-4---catching-distracted-drivers-in-the-act-as-officers-target-irresponsible-road-users-putting-lives-at-risk/), [[4]](https://www.gmp.police.uk/news/greater-manchester/news/news/2023/august/operation-tramline-172-driving-offences-over-four-day-period-in-july/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.gmp.police.uk/news/greater-manchester/news/news/2023/april/88-driving-offences-recorded-over-four-day-operation/), [[5]](https://www.manchesterfire.gov.uk/your-safety/road-safety/young-drivers/fatal-4/distractions/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[6]](https://highways-news.com/39782-2/), [[7]](https://roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/greater-manchester-to-trial-cameras-that-automatically-detect-distracted-drivers/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://highways-news.com/operation-top-deck-police-deployment-onboard-bee-network-bus-uncovers-dangerous-driving/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=operation-top-deck-police-deployment-onboard-bee-network-bus-uncovers-dangerous-driving> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gmp.police.uk/news/greater-manchester/news/news/2025/april/fatal-4---catching-distracted-drivers-in-the-act-as-officers-target-irresponsible-road-users-putting-lives-at-risk/> - Greater Manchester Police (GMP) conducted operations targeting the 'Fatal 4' offences: drink and drug driving, distractions (including mobile phone use), speeding, and seat belt non-compliance. Using elevated positions, such as Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) and Bee Network buses, officers identified and intercepted drivers engaging in these dangerous behaviours, issuing Traffic Offence Reports, Fixed Penalty Notices, and Notices of Intended Prosecution. The initiative aims to reduce serious collisions and improve road safety through education and enforcement.
3. <https://www.gmp.police.uk/news/greater-manchester/news/news/2023/april/88-driving-offences-recorded-over-four-day-operation/> - In April 2023, GMP's Traffic Safer Roads Targeting Team identified 88 driving offences over a four-day period during Operation Tramline. The operation, a collaboration with National Highways, utilised an HGV tractor unit to observe and record offences such as mobile phone use, seat belt non-compliance, and driving without due care. Offenders were intercepted and dealt with accordingly, highlighting the ongoing efforts to combat the 'Fatal Four' offences and enhance road safety.
4. <https://www.gmp.police.uk/news/greater-manchester/news/news/2023/august/operation-tramline-172-driving-offences-over-four-day-period-in-july/> - In July 2023, GMP's Commercial Vehicle Unit identified 172 driving offences over a four-day period during Operation Tramline. The operation, which has been running since 2015, involved patrolling motorways and gathering evidence on offences such as mobile phone use, seat belt non-compliance, and driving without due care. Offenders were issued Traffic Offence Reports, with one individual arrested for various road traffic offences, underscoring the commitment to enforcing road safety laws.
5. <https://www.manchesterfire.gov.uk/your-safety/road-safety/young-drivers/fatal-4/distractions/> - Distracted driving, particularly mobile phone use, significantly increases the risk of collisions. In 2018, over 30% of collisions involving fatalities or serious injuries in Greater Manchester were attributed to driver distraction. The law prohibits using a hand-held mobile phone while driving, with penalties including fines and points on the driving licence. Employers can also be prosecuted if they require employees to use mobile phones while driving.
6. <https://highways-news.com/39782-2/> - Safer Roads Greater Manchester launched a campaign to combat drivers' mobile phone usage, highlighting the life-changing consequences of such distractions. Between 2014 and 2024, there were 1,174 incidents where driver distraction was a contributing factor, resulting in 117 serious collisions and 17 fatalities. A trial using state-of-the-art cameras recorded 3,205 instances of drivers using mobile phones or not wearing seat belts, emphasising the need for increased awareness and enforcement.
7. <https://roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/greater-manchester-to-trial-cameras-that-automatically-detect-distracted-drivers/> - Greater Manchester is trialling 'Heads Up' technology from Acusensus to automatically detect drivers using mobile phones or not wearing seat belts. The system captures footage of passing vehicles, which is processed using artificial intelligence to identify potential offences. This initiative aims to better understand the prevalence of distracted driving and seat belt non-compliance, informing future road safety campaigns to improve compliance and reduce collisions.